POETRY IN AMERICA: SRL'S ANNUAL SURVEY

Saturday Review of Literature

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Paul I. Wellman, author of "The Chain." (See page 25)

The Muse—With Yankee Accent

By RICHARD EBERHART

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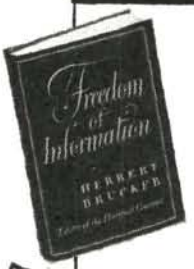
Books for You

Pungent defense of the press!

Is our press the villain it is often accused of being? No, says this author, defending the press against the grave charges of biased news, venality, subservience to advertisers, prying into people's lives, and so on. He maintains that the press must keep its character as an unmuzzled check on government, and shows the great dangers to our way of life when it fails to play its proper part. Author is editor of *The Hartford Courant* (Conn.). $4.00



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Cover drawing by Hal McIntosh

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William Rose Benét, *Editor*

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IN 1634, during the great age of Descartes and Hobbes, Oxford University Press published *The Feminin' Monarchi; or The Histori of Bee's shewing Their admirable Natur' and Propertis; Their Generation and Colonis; Their government, Loyalti, Art, Industri; Enimi's, Wars, Magnanimiti, &c. Together With the right Ordering of them from tim' to tim': and the sweet Profit arising ther'of.* While the political life of insects offers many an interesting parallel to that of man, it brings to mind at the same time the words of Aristotle, who wrote in his *Politics:* 'Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident . . . It is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state.'

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TRADE Winds

ANTHONY BUMP, the midtown publisher, was locked in a top-secret conference with his advertising manager, Wildword, who was known as "Deadline Joe" because of a constitutional disability to submit copy until ten minutes before the issue for which it was intended went to press. The subject under discussion was the identity of a mysterious blonde beauty who had appeared at the Publishers' Ad Club the day previous, and the two engrossed executives were understandably annoyed when a third character barged into the room unannounced.

The intruder was a sour-visaged little man, with rimless spectacles, who delivered his remarks with elaborate sarcasm and a mock humility, as though an audience of thousands was cheering his performance.

"Who am I to burst into the innermost sanctuary of the great publisher himself?" he began quietly, but immediately raised his voice to add, "I have to, however, because I understand it was you who wrote the jacket blurb for my new book."

"That I did," said Mr. Bump proudly. "I worked on it for two hours. I'm so glad you like it."

"*Like* it?" screamed the intruder. "I *loathe* it. If you think I am going to sacrifice myself upon the altar of your inflated ego, and allow you to perpetrate your alleged witticisms on *my* jacket . . . ."

"Gosh," interrupted Bump, "I only was trying to make you happy."

The intruder ignored Bump completely. "Another thing," he exclaimed venomously. "My third cousin was married last Tuesday. Did you send me a note of congratulations? You did not. Common courtesy is denied me. Also, why is my book not listed in the *Times* best-seller chart this Sunday? Is your sales staff actually working, or do all of them, like you, go off from Thursday to Tuesday?"

"May I point out," said Mr. Bump mildly, "that it is now 6:12 P. M. on Friday evening, and all of us seem to be still here to accept your gracious tributes in person?"

"Your excuses will get you nowhere," the intruder snarled. "I want to go over my last royalty statement with you too. What do you mean by charging me for those copies I sent to 217 relations? Who can give a book better publicity than relations? I'll go into that, however, not to mention the dozen other things you've done to make our contract for two more books legally invalid, when I have more time. Now I have to go and close the deal for the sale of my house. Obviously I cannot continue to live in a community where every neighbor within a radius of twelve miles has insulted or defrauded me. Incidentally, who is this peculiar-looking clunk with you?"

The reeling Mr. Bump pulled himself together sufficiently to say, "This is Joe Wildword, who wrote the ad of your book that appeared last Sunday."

"I might have known it," said the intruder, turning for the exit. "Imagine putting my book second—and on a left-hand page at that."

When he was gone, Wildword gasped, "Don't tell me that was ——?" "Yes, sir," agreed Mr. Bump wearily. "You have just met the most beloved, the gayest, and the most irrepressible humorist in America.". . .

"It's all right, I guess, but give me Leopold Stokowski."

ROBERT J. LANDRY was overcome by the advertising magnate who told an account executive, "You're fired; turn in your ulcer.". . . Russel Crouse, coauthor of "Life with Mother," decided to catch the Wednesday matinee performance of a two-day-old play that had been accorded murderous notices by the critics. Anxious to avoid giving the impression that he was coming to gloat over the corpse, Crouse sidled unobtrusively to the box-office and said, "I'd like a seat in the last row of the orchestra." The treasurer looked surprised, but handed him a ticket. "This is in Row D," protested Crouse. "I asked for the last row." "Mister," said the treasurer, "at this performance Row D *is* the last row.". . . In New Orleans, Frances Parkinson Keyes, author of "Dinner at Antoine's," is the queen of Beauregard House and everything else she surveys. In Boston, however, at a Louisburg Square party, she discovered she was known only as "Peter Keyes's mother." The fourth young man who thus identified her aroused Mrs. K's ire, an operation not to be undertaken lightly. "I am beginning to realize," she remarked icily,

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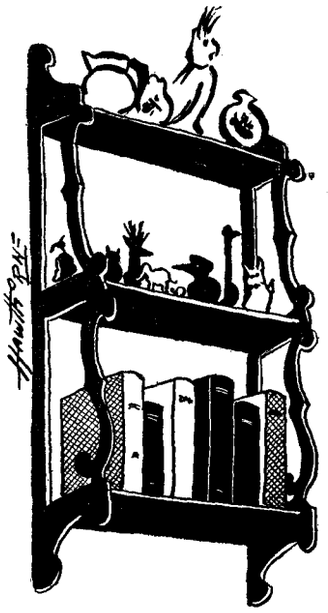

"that here in Boston, being Peter's mother seems to be my chief claim to fame." The young man, vastly unimpressed, inquired, "What is it anywhere else?" . . . . Mrs. Keyes, incidentally, has signed a new contract with her present publisher, Kitty Messner, for her next two novels. That ought to put the quietus on a lot of beautiful rumors . . . .

ROD MACLEAN, sometime banker, sometime versifier, and always booster for Los Angeles, has gathered the cream of his year's crop in a booklet beautifully printed by the Plantin Press, and entitled "California Mistology." I liked:

Some people think they're smart to be
Caucasian
Instead of red or Negroid or Eurasian;
If they were percolating mentally
They'd realize they're that way occidentally.

* * *

The weird shape
Of the ape
Is possibly due
To a few
Biological bungles
In the jungles.

* * *

The bigoted are retrogressive
(To perpetuate a platitude),
Because they suffer from progressive
Hardening of the attitude.

* * *

Current women's fashions
Moderate men's passions.
(Aside to Rod: The heck they do.) . . .

TRADE WINDS WOULD like to place a couple of laurel wreaths on the noble brows of two Manhattan literary critics who have dared to risk their craft in comparatively uncharted waters: Charles Poore, of *The New York*

from THE INNER SANCTUM *of*
SIMON *and* SCHUSTER
Publishers • Rockefeller Center • *New York*

MAX LERNER
author of ACTIONS AND PASSIONS

A short history of a fateful decade in world history could be summarized for some future TOYNBEE, GIBBON or DURANT by simply listing the five crucial themes and dates that follow:

It Is Later Than You Think	1938
Ideas Are Weapons	1940
Ideas For the Ice Age	1941
The Consequences of the Atom	1945
The Multiple Revolution of Our Time	1948

Actually, these stirring and seminal phrases are all titles of books and essays written during the last ten years by MAX LERNER, whose latest work, *Actions and Passions*, is proudly published this week by THE INNER SANCTUM.

The new book takes its title from a sentence in a Memorial Day speech delivered by JUSTICE OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JR. in 1884:

"*As life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time, at peril of being judged not to have lived.*"

Your correspondent believes that for true liberals MAX LERNER is always a "must," and particularly so today, when the passing of *The Star* and the ending of the experiment begun with *The Newspaper PM* finds many "displaced liberals" anxiously seeking a sense of continuity and perspective.

For MAX LERNER, biographer and interpreter of JUSTICE HOLMES, editor of THORSTEN VEBLEN, MACHIAVELLI, ADAM SMITH, and ARISTOTLE, teacher at Harvard, Williams, and Sarah Lawrence, contributor to *The New Republic* and *The Nation*, and formerly managing editor of *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* is, in the opinion of this correspondent and a veritable host of students and readers, the very model of a liberal's liberal.

In *Actions and Passions*, he examines "the multiple revolution of our time," and offers us "a sense of pattern amidst the chaos of vast and malignant forces beyond our control," as well as "a sense of togetherness amidst the moral nihilism."

But in the best liberal tradition, the book is human as well as humane. The author *also* discusses CHARLIE CHAPLIN, the ballet, LEO DUROCHER, the movies and the gifts of the Magi.

For the ten best ten-word definitions of the word "liberal," as used in this tribute to *Actions and Passions*, THE INNER SANCTUM will present ten complimentary copies of the book—all first editions and all inscribed by MAX LERNER.

Definitions submitted for this prize contest should be sent within forty-eight hours directly to the editor of this column, at THE INNER SANCTUM of SIMON AND SCHUSTER, attention of M.L.S.

As a starter, simply to stimulate thought, your correspondent recalls a few older definitions that have had currency in our time: "*A liberal is a radical with a wife and two children*" (discarded by this column as too cynical) . . . "*A liberal is a man who believes in open competition in the market-place of ideas*" . . . "*A liberal is a man who believes that freedom is more than a word*" . . . "*A liberal is a man who believes in persuasion by light rather than by heat*" . . . But your correspondent has promised himself that he will be content to *judge* the contest, not *enter* it. Readers may regard this paragraph, therefore, as an R.S.V.P. in the lower lefthand corner of their *Invitation to Lerner.*

—M.L.S.

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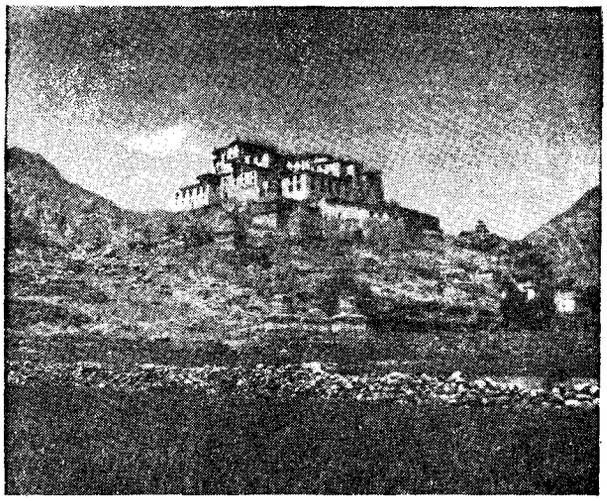

High adventure
on the roof of the world

PEAKS AND LAMAS

by Marco Pallis

✠ *Peaks and Lamas* is three kinds of a book: a fascinating account of climbing in the Himalayas, a profound and revealing study of Tibetan Buddhism, and an informed and detailed revelation of Tibetan art and life.

✠ First published in 1940 in a small edition imported from England, it has now been extensively revised, considerably enlarged, and completely manufactured in the United States. In addition, Mr. Pallis has added a remarkable doctrinal chapter called "The Presiding Idea."

✠ *Peaks and Lamas* is a large octavo of over 400 pages enhanced by 75 unique and beautiful photographs, taken by the author and his friends, and several maps. Typography and binding design are by W. A. DWIGGINS.

✠ When *Peaks and Lamas* was first published, the *New York Times* said: "It is indeed a rich book, from a strange and fascinating part of the world. In its wholeness, its background of earnestness and scholarship, its vividness and perception, it brings a strange people to life, with their traditions, their present ways, their problems. 'Peaks and Lamas' should be invaluable reading for every one who is specifically interested in its subject, and enticing as well as rewarding for almost any one"

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who will send you his spring catalogue on request

Times, for the humor and originality that enliven his reviews of even the unlikeliest books, and Sterling North, of the *New York Post* and Lord knows how many other subscribers to his syndicated pieces, for the consummate smoothness and showmanship of his "Books on Trial" radio program, heard every Tuesday at 8:00 P.M. on Station WMGM. In his spare moments, North also wrote "So Dear to My Heart," which Walt Disney has fashioned into his best picture since "Dumbo". . . . Poore recently discovered that it is dangerous to kid around with authors from Mississippi. One indiscreet word, and a Delta Upsilandslide descended upon him, composed of such distinguished native sons and daughters as William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Hodding Carter, Herschel Brickell, Ben Ames Williams, David L. Cohn, Stark Young, Ben Wasson, Nash K. Burger, Shelby Foote, and Maxwell Bodenheim. To cap the climax, it developed that

Giant Killer

By Gertrude Claytor

THAT castle perched upon the green
Might be a cloud to prove the sky
But for the tenant that it keeps,
And for the light, a wicked eye
That turns and blinks when darkness crawls
With me into the monstrous vine,
Through the black leaves I climb and cling;
The beans like bells in clusters swing,
They droop, they intertwine.

There is no moon, the stars are dim—
The strength is in my hand
To use the foliage and the night
To kill as I have planned;
Among the leaves I hear a bird
Flutter in waking fright,
And on and on and up and up
Until I reach the light.

A gleam of yellow ringed by gray,
A wavering light and small—
And now I see the man I seek
In shadow on the wall.
He speaks, I hear the horn of hate,
His thought has felt me near,
And all the fears of all my life
Rise in a giant fear!

And while I look and while he roars
Until the light grows dim,
Seeing the terror in his eyes
I have no fear of him;
But there are things that must be known
And this is what I know,
I fear the silence that will rise
When I have struck the blow.

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Tennessee Williams, despite his name, was born in old Mississippi too—in a town called Columbus, to be exact. . . . Bodenheim's birthplace was the thriving metropolis of Hermanville (pop.: 206). I wrote Tess Crager, cicerone of the canes (sugar and Harnett) to inquire, "Did you know that the one and only Bodenheim was born in virtually a suburb of your beloved Natchez?" "Nonsense," she replied hotly. "That's just insidious Yankee propaganda." . . .

I HOPE IT will gratify Kay Archer, of the D. H. Holmes Company in New Orleans, to know that a brand-new elevator has been installed at Random House (known in some quarters as the Palazzo Thickens). The glamorous Kay and a friend were on their way up to call on Sales Manager Lew Miller last year when the old elevator ceased functioning suddenly half way between the third floor and the fourth. The girls took the first hour of their captivity with noteworthy calm and good grace, and only closed their account when a heartless executive began throwing peanuts and Hershey Bars at them through the ceiling grille-work. Two firemen and the intrepid Harold Kittleson extricated them barely in time to make the cocktail hour. . . .

GEORGE KAUFMAN recalls another situation that is not covered in the new "Vogue Book of Etiquette." A gay party given by Beatrice and himself years ago in their old house on Ninety-fourth Street had broken up about 3:00 A. M. The Kaufmans locked the front door, put out the hall lights, and walked back to the dining room, where, to their horror, they discovered thirty guests still chatting happily. —BENNETT CERF.

Midnight

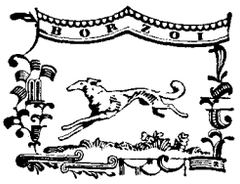
By Mary Barnard

NOW the dead lend us
Peace for the dark hours.

At midnight the never-to-awaken
Sleep lightly; yet those who lay
In love at death-fall have quiet to lend.

Only the murdered must walk.
The murderer clutches at sleep
As at scant covers; wakes chilled.

Come now,
Comes now death-lent oblivion. I love
Her who died unknown to me.
I adjust my bones to the composure
Of hers.
Peace fall on my exile
From hers.



Cheers from the critics are resounding
for this subtly exciting story
of a young girl's awakening to love

THE SPRINGS

a novel

by Anne Goodwin Winslow

"There isn't anyone now writing at all like her. Other novelists write with greater power and a great many others with more sound and fury. But few write with greater delicacy of perception or with greater subtlety of craftsmanship. Mrs. Winslow is an accomplished artist and a profoundly understanding interpreter of the experience of living."
—ORVILLE PRESCOTT

"It is the quality of . . . innocence which the author has so tenderly and convincingly evoked. . . . What makes [Mrs. Winslow's] world a joy to be in are the humorous morsels of dialogue, the creation of character in a few clear strokes, the laughter, gentle but genuine, and the author's genuine feeling for beauty."
—*New York Herald Tribune Book Review*

"Within the deceptively simple outlines of Anne Goodwin Winslow's latest book are displayed the several qualities of excellence that distinguish all her novels. Here . . . is the same effective use of understatement . . . the rare naturalness . . . along with a fresh discernment that is the essence of the true artist." —*New York Times Book Review*

"Truth walks boldly on every page . . . wise and tender, sad and gay, and beautiful with the beauty of the 'blue remembered hills' of youth . . . [it] can be read and reread uncovering delicate new shades of meaning with each reading. . . ."—*Harper's*

"Through this charming study . . . there blows a fragrant wind as from the month of May . . . [it] is a little jewel of restraint, harmony, truth-telling." —DOROTHY CANFIELD, *Book-of-the-Month Club News*

"A wise and tender book which discerning readers will welcome with enthusiasm."—*Christian Science Monitor*

"The story of a Southern summer of fifty years ago, related in a polished and unhesitating manner that is a great pleasure in itself."
—*New Yorker*

"As satisfying as violin music heard by moonlight. . . . So haunting is this aquatint of life . . . that few who read will quickly forget."
—STERLING NORTH

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Muse—With Yankee Accent

RICHARD EBERHART

Richard Eberhart

POETRY in America, considering the art as it has been practised in this century, is vigorous, valuable, and rewarding of study by an increasing audience of discriminating readers. It is periodically alleged that the state of our poetry is low, if not decadent; occasional critics like to announce our failures, and call for the new great poet. Someone said recently that we may be getting ready for the meteoric approach of our Shakespeare. Actually, the state of American poetry when looked at not of one year, or ten, but from roughly the First World War, justifies the notion that it is a life-giving body of work, informed with variety and depth, and bristling with tricky skills. The reader should be reminded that for a society to produce one poet of major importance in any decade would be a remarkable achievement.

It is necessary to have a catholic approach to poetry. It is an ancient art always being adapted to new perceptions as these are essential to the lives of new poets, yet there is a central urgency about it which goes back to primitive needs in primitive man, if it does not, in fact, go back to uncontrollable Adam. Just as regional poetry transcends regionalism, as we shall argue, it seems arguable that American poetry transcends America. By this I mean that the best poetry written by Americans does not have a specific "American" quality as its fundamental quality, but is accommodated to general truths. There are, of course, many distinctions between American and English verse. I do not mean that American poetry must be like English poetry (nor that English poetry must be like European poetry) but that both transcend nationality and survive in their great examples as profound utterances available to the spirit of man everywhere.

The opposite argument may be employed, with provocative results, yet it seems evident that the profounder poetry becomes the more nearly it will approach comprehension of the plight of man; that it deals with the large and basic concepts of birth, love, and death; and that it is in its monolithic exemplars not regional, as it is certainly not chauvinistic. It provides symbolic occasions for whatever feelings attach to it. We see, for instance, the incorporation of Indian religious terms, without difficulty, in a major work. The point is as transparent as that Wordsworth wrote sometimes of a region of England, but his meanings are not limited to it.

Most, but not all, of the American poets of the last forty years come from families which have resided here for generations. They feel that America is old, not young as is often held, and they do not have to protest the fact. It is also true that some of our best poets are of relatively recent arrival here, so to speak, and it must be borne in mind that any generalization at once makes its opposite leap to mind. It does not seem that American poetry is immature or that it is young in a deleterious sense. It has scope and vigor. It has striven in its major articulators for realities which are similar to those striven for by English and European poets, that is, for the basic realities of poetry, which are spiritual. Using the means, the scenes, the tempo, the individuation of feelings necessarily imposed by our geographical status, it has been acutely conscious of birth, love, death, and change. While it is possible to chart the development of American poetry in this century, which has been performed in varying ways by various critics, it would be rash to generalize about its future direction. It would also be a sterile occupation.

Poetry is inextricably bound to social reality. It is a social act which must be related to society. A visual definition of society is that it is your ten or twelve closest persons extended, and in the case of America to 140 million persons. That few of this vast aggregate are interested in poetry is a fact, and a situation of ridiculous comic impossibility would be to regard them all as deeply concerned with poetry.

Each poet lives and writes as he is able to do, as he invents ways of doing. He may ignore the social responsibility and think to write only for himself, for other poets, or for a few readers. Yet the value of poetry is in its acceptance, sometime, by someone. Its readers have as much responsi-

At Rest in the Blast

By Marianne Moore

LIKE a bulwark against fate,
By the thrust of the blast
Lead-saluted;
Saluted by lead?
As though flying
Old Glory full mast.

Pent by power that holds it fast—
A paradox. . . . Hard-pressed,
You take the blame
And are inviolate—
Down-cast but not cast

Down. Some would bind by promises,
But not the tempest-tossed—
Borne by the might
Of the storm to a height,
From destruction—
At rest in the blast.

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bility to quality as the makers. Hopkins, who during his life published only a few poems, is loved and studied minutely. The value of his poetry was potentially there all the time. And the value will change with time.

The need for expression differs in each poet; the causes are complex, are hardly to be unraveled (witness the obscurity still surrounding the innermost secrets of the creative power of Crane); the causes are a fascinating study for the critic. The result is the poem, the body of work a poet produces during his life. Poetry should give pleasure, although it often comes from pain, from suffering, from desolate realization. A poem once published is an object for use by the reader, and suffers the fate of changing examination.

Meticulous criticism of texts, with resultant perceptive utterances, is characteristic of our time, and finds careful exponents in Empson and Blackmur. This is a type of criticism which gives a rich sense of reality. It tries to keep to the terms of the poem, examining all their ramifications, nuances, and ambiguities; it is more than explication, being the exercise of one sensibility upon another, originally. This school deserves a wider audience than it has.

Is poetry an aristocratic or a democratic function? We do not live in an aristocracy. We are a people struggling with our democracy. What, then, is the poet's place? Poetry is often the product of anarchic individualism. It is steeped in root consciousness. It is the radical utterance of man. Talent, or genius, is unpredictable, cannot be manufactured, and differentiates, often profoundly, the poet from the society from which he springs. The poet's sensibility is surcharged with study, learning, knowledge. He is the maker, so far divorced from the public that, as we have seen in two or three examples during this century, the intelligent elements of it take ten years to come up to his work. In this sense, the better the poet, the greater may be his divorce from the society which must give him acclaim, and enjoy his works; the farther he may stand apart from and above the public. If this is true, it is not an argument for the poet as a democratic symbol. He will exist principally in the most intelligent reaches of society; he will move and have his being largely in the world of the learned, of the universities; he will be anatomized by specialists.

Is it possible, on the other hand, to have a great democratic poet in this age? We would delight in proof. Whether the society produces the poet, or the poet produces the society

(in the long, historical perspective) is like asking about the chicken and the egg.

It may be reasonable to suppose that a society which is largely and nominally Christian, for example, will accept a major poet whose works are largely Christian, but it would be interesting to speculate what credence such a poet would win if the society were switched at once to an atheistic one. The probable result would prove something about the social nature of poetry. The "Cantos" derive from a concept of paganism, as against a Christian one, and they are probably not as useful to many in our society as are, say, "Four Quartets."

Even today Whitman is not read by the masses. Sandburg says that poetry should be for truck drivers, which no one with a catholic sensibility would deplore, but all would relish and promote. The fact is that we are a large people and that we ought to have a differentiated poetry, as, in fact, we have. The art is not limited to the vision of any single practitioner, which we might say would be true even were he our mythical Shakespeare. Consider the actual Greene, Peele, Nashe, Beaumont, Fletcher, Lyly, Chapman, Webster, and Tourneur. Perhaps, in the future, poetry may become a matter of world-consciousness, a poetry not limited to the West as it has been in English for centuries.

It is possible to specify certain poets and their poems as regional. Such regionalism usually has to do with the root consciousness of the poet, but not with his influence, which may approach national or international proportions. It is the non-regional meaning in poetry, I believe—that essence which transcends the regional limitation—,which is of principal importance to the art. Thus, the major Southerners are those who have achieved a general communicability. Some of the best poems of the Midwestern school of some years ago can be read without local referents. The present Far-Western or California school, in its best work, likewise strikes into the heart, not of California, but of the mind, of the spirit, or of nature, and attempts to communicate whatever is central to the consciousness of the individual author.

The New England writers, as in the case of Frost, transcend the supposition of an essential limitation to place, in works available to many as emblems of conduct, statements of policy, ironical colloquies, or utterances of valid philosophical truth. Certainly also, the poets of "the country of New York" are not limited spiritually to that region. Nor is the best poetry of Canadians specifically "Canadian." There are qualities in every poetry which place it in a definite category, but there is a type of spirituality, traditional in English poetry, which may come from any region of the country, and cannot necessarily be predicated from any.

Thus far no particular trait has been isolated as typical of the Forties as a literary decade, but it may be that some characteristic will develop comparable to the "social consciousness" of the Thirties. It now appears that the valuable poetry of that time is not the most political; those poems are most valuable which transcend the decade by whatever of the timeless they may have in them.

CHANGING times change the public verdict on poetry. As decades pass, there will be only a small body of work in each which will survive, and of that a smaller portion still which will survive a hundred years. Is it an arbitrary generalization to assert that a poem which survives, to delight the reader after a hundred years, must have in it something of whatever is essential in the nature of man?

Certainly there is an original and vigorous American idiom. But it seems to me that the essence of our poetry inheres in qualities not limited to America, nor to England, qualities which are non-regional, and are as old as man. If the work of this sort is small, that is as it should be.

A survey of our poetry might well end in examples from young poets. Below are three selections from contemporary poets who have thus far published only one book of poetry, which may illustrate some of the diversity and originality of recent American verse.

The following poem, "Late Air," by Elizabeth Bishop, is from "North and South":

From a magician's midnight sleeve
the radio-singers
distribute all their love-songs
over the dew-wet lawns.

(*Continued on page* 36)

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Poetry Can't Wind Clocks, but...

RALPH GUSTAFSON

THE contention that poetry is written to better the world has been intimately cherished for so long, is still put forward with such well-meaning enthusiasm by poetry's apologists, that to deny it always seems graceless treason. On the other side, to contend that poetry, nevertheless, does not function in "perfect inutility" is to run counter to some authoritative contemporary esthetics. The truth is, poetry is neither propaganda nor isolation.

Poetry is in such a sorry state of neglect that to claim for the art the functions our civilization prizes is a heavy temptation. If it could be proved that a poem affected the stock market (upward), the efficiency of an assembly-line (like music), or the deliberations of the United Nations, poetry's apologists would have an easier time of it. But there is no demonstrable proof a poem has. Good poems are not written to effect any of these tangibles and to define their function in terms of science, politics, theology, is to misjudge the nature of poetry. Those who defend poetry in this manner, however honestly, do a disservice by publishing a performance for poetry which it must fail. The perceptive will rightly ignore the claim. The defense is quickly demolished by the evidence of poetry itself and everyone left with his suspicion reinforced that poetry is of no use whatever.

Critics of the new school have effectively exposed the fallacy that (good) poets are concerned with purposes extraneous to the poetry. They have shown the value inherent in a poem to be its realized poetry and nothing else; that poetry "aims at nothing outside itself" and can only be an instrument of the poet's practical will the less it is poetry. Poetry, rather than striving to make the world go round, makes the world *known*. Authoritative criticism for the past decade has been concerned with this central truth—and with the relevant problems raised by the threat to such a poetry from a world aggressively dedicated to demanding "utility" in all production. The new critics engaged themselves wholly, with estimable tenacity; their efforts have safeguarded poetry.

But there, for the most part, they stop. To ask more is to open our gratitude to discount. Thus to rest the case is consistent with esthetics. But in the exterior light of the despised state of

poetry, to be content with that consistency is to be isolated, if not academic. The problem of the value of the *created* poetry must have comparable statement, and the widest possible communication for that statement be accepted and found. The world *known* through poetry is of immense use. The authority of generative criticism behind statement of this truth is the best hope for removing the misapprehensions which have socially beggared poetry. This dreams of no pathway beaten through the grass roots to the poet's door. But it does suggest that responsibility has largely been walking around (however healthily) inside the limits of esthetics. Authority is urgently needed outside. There is, it is true, some refusal to admit that there is any outside. "Poetry finds its true usefulness in its perfect inutility." But that is surely a statement which only confesses the extremity of an anxiety lest science enter the precincts of art.

At one time, T. S. Eliot felt that "never were there fewer settled assumptions as to what poetry is, or why it comes about, or what it is for." Fifteen and more years have been impressively productive as to what poetry is and why it comes about. Comparatively little has been done, at least in the public domain, about what it is for. Is it invidious to assume that little has been done because *within the profession* the question is redundant?

The present contention is that poetry has a "use"—a use beyond its own self-contemplation, a use which criticism is failing to publish, and in failing to do so is neglecting to acknowledge a weapon in the struggle against what that criticism most vehemently inveighs—our culture of measurement, the adulation of "progress," the monopoly of the scientific attitude of mind. Granted that "the demands of the will" be excluded from the creative act, that adequate warning be sounded that a poem is still determined by what it is and not by what it does, is it any violation of canon to demand of criticism exercise of its will to advertise the value of the created act as a corrective to the malady diagnosed? This is to admit a "practical use" for poetry. But if this is denied, then poetry must be denied power equivalent to the science which (a matter of "historical fact") affected the hearts of men—the trite targets poetry still aims at. In that event, socially, art may as well capitulate and exist on gratuities.

The enormity of the suggestion to confront the times with poetry invites derision. As if one were in favor of atomic control by incantation. It is to share the task of convincing the economic man, hoodwinked by the brilliance of his scientific heritage, that he is dangerously not the whole man. This man is the Adam who defines measurement as stature; knowledge, as wisdom; the Thomas conditioned to admit only demonstrable truth. By an accumulation of almost irretrievable stupidities he has been brought to adulate science—an adulation of such proportions that science itself is impelled to issue warning. The task is, without making science a scapegoat, to impose the truth: if to value is rational, then science is irrational. Perhaps only the victim can change himself. It seems within reason that he now wishes to. But he is Diogenes with a yardstick.

"The arts are inevitably an appraisal of existence." How clear, then,

Incorrupt

By Dilys Bennett Laing

BEFORE my father's bridges sprang in steel
or his pure chimneys climbed like reeds of stone,
their forms were fixed, their tensions were all known.
Then came the atomic function to reveal

in transient congress the immortal fact
pondered, in faith and quiet, by the mind.
Should war explode these yesses, one might find
blueprinted, negative, their truth intact.

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the use of poetry; that its value is prevented from being only valuable to itself; that it looks toward action! Is the value, contemplated, returned to the poem, or committed to some part of the contemplator's anatomy insulated from all activating impulse? "The constant rediscovery of the permanent nature of man." How better put the brakes on science? It has been argued that "practical experimental knowledge can alone fit means to ends." Does not such a contention use the deplored logic of science: that the objective and verifiable alone is to be accepted as truth? To say that poetry can achieve demonstrable effect would be an extravagance. That it is therefore defeasible, more of an absurdity.

Aloofness toward the examination of the humanistic role for poetry in contemporary society is to leave poetry outwardly dislocated. It is to leave the poet denied of identification as a poet with the society in which he exists. But most certainly it is to ignore the value of poetry itself.

How authoritative criticism is to make itself heard is a pegasus of another color. Paul Revere won't do. But the Humpty-Dumpty method won't either. This latter process of enlightening the public is to make words mean what you don't think they mean. It is an esoteric pursuit requiring much agility of the intellect to arrive at a simple conclusion. The method is much in evidence. Neither is anything gained by the smart-Aleck approach. What is *not* needed above all is solemn earnestness. No matter what it does, poetry is first of all delight. And delight in examination it should have. But the smart-Aleck approach is something else. This method consists of elevating yourself to the superior side by intimate asides to the cognoscenti about "benefiting suffering humanity." The procedure, by pushing innocence to the wall, is very funny. For example, this method can sum up superiorly the audience for poetry as "myopic schoolteachers, pimply young men who eat in cafeterias, and fellow poets." A snicker at the right moment is always good for an entrée into Olympus. Poetry is a backyard in which no one but poets and critics can "play."

But it isn't. Those with authority should publicly declare it. Poetry can't wind clocks, but it can tell the time. "Wholeness of vision," once it is realized, who knows, may, at the least, blunt Thanatos.

Canadian-born Ralph Gustafson's first volume of poetry received the Quebec Government Literary Award in 1935. He is also author of the verse play "Alfred the Great" and editor of several anthologies.

Donagh MacDonagh of Dublin

PADRAIC COLUM

THERE has been so much talk about putting on Donagh MacDonagh's verse comedy "Happy as Larry" in New York that I thought that by the time I got round to writing about his poems his name would be well known on this side. This has not happened: "The Hungry Grass," published by Faber & Faber, London, comes while his name is not yet current.

One of the qualities that excite me in his poems is Donagh MacDonagh's power of making poetry out of public affairs. There is his "January 16th 1800." The date is that on which a bribed legislature, against Henry Grattan's oration, sold out Irish autonomy. The gravity that belongs to history is in the lines:

Within the blinded colonnade of state
The aging Volunteer opposed his voice,
Silver of speech against the golden bribe.
And knew before the candles lost their flame
That fires were quenched that would not light again,

Could never light, for as he left the House
His world left with him; his whole century
Guttered and died. But day was in the street.
Peace is not bought, security not sold;
The future has no price in speech or gold.

This earnestness, this tone of one who contemplates historic happenings is in other poems, in "Jason," where the poet perceives:

And soon great shining weapons, beautiful,

"There is in Donagh MacDonagh's poems a struggle for an unmortgaged self."

And compact of all mind's genius, devastate
Millions of seedling warriors; but Cadmus's field
Is fertile still, and millions spring to birth
Who in an instant turn again to earth.

But the poet does not always go in for the weighty tone. There is a lilt that stays in one's memory in the poem modeled on a folksong, "Going to Mass last Sunday," and in several of his versions of West of Ireland folksongs such as "Bridin Vesey":

You are my first and last song,
The harp that lilts my fingers,
Your lips like frozen honey,
Eyes like the mountain pool.

And there is the re-creation of the eighteenth-century Dublin jail song with its heady meter making more grim a grim content. "Happy as Larry" is not included in this volume; it is a comedy in one scene, satirical and uproarious, in swaggering rhymed verse.

This poet is the son of Thomas MacDonagh, one of the poets who signed the declaration of Irish independence and was tried by court martial and executed in 1916. He has a significant heritage. There is in his poems a struggle for an unmortgaged self as well as a sense of something that binds him to the ground and to what is below the ground. This sense gives a sharp reality to certain of the poems in "The Hungry Grass." At a funeral in a country place he sees:

the coffin sink beneath the green
Level of the world.

And the famine-stricken man in the poem that gives title to the collection is left:

Little the earth reclaimed from that poor body,
And yet remembering him the place has grown
Bewitched and the thin grass he nourishes
Racks with his famine, sucks marrow from the bone.

The poet realizes that the city is shared by those who are buried beneath its pavements and that they indeed have the greater share of the city:

Few sights are ours alone. We share the river,
The mountains and the sea with all dead eyes

(Continued on page 37)

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Oration About America

JEREMY INGALLS

HOW is the issue declared which was always declared,
Claimed, declaimed, explicit once again,
This nearly indefinable defined:
America, this necessary name.

No other word, this word, though lost in time
In its first root, by chance most typical
Lives soul's accretion on four syllables:
Astronomy's minor clerk, by chance set down
Newly baptized to maps by clerkish pens,
In sum of errors and a schoolman's whim,
Come chance-ascribed to be the sponsoring
Of symbol seized to shape insistent dream.

No other word but one so shaken free
Of found association could contain
Insistent hope persisting that (to be
So marked upon the finger, woman, man,
Each man, each woman, individual,
Within but separate within the tribe)
This land should be, all continents contained,
Wherein that hope comes fact within the flesh,
A name and face for every being born
To that equality no man confers
But is in human kind the prime and given.
Is this what you would say? Not in these words
Somewhat more formal than the style you choose
Here on your own front porch. Is this your meaning?

This evening you drove home. If you had walked,
Slowly, across the bridge, if you had stopped
To look? The factories are toward the west—
Sun on the sheds and stacks. And by the tracks,
Small as the figures brushed on Chinese hills,
Man in the universe, the figures small
Setting out flares for warning, mending rails.
The college on the east—the new-green trees;
Library windows answer sun with sun.
And there, below the river slope, again
Miniature persons. Sturdy as the rock,
Her chosen cushion, there's the rugged woman
Hard by her man, his swing and lunge to cast—
And leans on his own weight—habitual ease
Holding the line to river. Look again.
Under the shadow of the bridge, beyond
On jut and boulder up and down the stream,
Figures in the camouflage of dusk
After work, the cast of fishing lines.

Is this what you would say? You ask us in,
Neighbors of modest houses, quilt-cut lawns
(The girl in jeans sets match to last year's leaves;
Here, bicycle hordes, the boys). "Sure I'm annoyed.
That girl out there brings too much talk from school.
She stamps her foot. She slams the door—because
I warn her she won't find much good in Jews.
I've warned him, warned that boy of mine he'll learn,
When it's his money that he spends, he'll mind
His dark-skinned friend wears clothes just like his own
And asks him in to dinner. Yes, and more,
My wife hears lectures, frets herself to feed
Her parcel of Indians. Not that I much mind,
But done enough, I say. We gave them land.
Lord knows that I don't wish them any harm.
Of course with posters up at that garage
And giving them out for free, sure I went down.
I went down twice, got two, and had them framed.
Walk in and see them—hanging in their rooms.
The boy's got one, the girl the other. See?
The Declaration and the Bill of Rights
Like real engraving." On their walls and framed.
Here on your own front porch, is this your meaning?

"About the books, well, I don't know so much.
One fellow at the mill claims he reads Whitman.
My girl likes books, though don't know what she sees
In all that print that's just about some whale.
And there's my smartest clerk. He loaned me once
Was years ago, this poetry that told
A yarn supposed about our Civil War.
But I got lost the way it starts and tells
So long about that captain and his slaves.
You poets ought to give it fast and straight,
Just punch it out for points, like in the news."

What should we give? And would you then believe?
You who have taught your children love of God
And written the annual check to feed His house,
Do you assent each soul by Him endowed
No more nor less than every soul He made?
Are you your brother's keeper? Increase your speed
For fear the Word will meet you coming home,
Ancestral ghost that bore the book and school,
The natural law beyond the tyrant's heel?
Here on your own front porch the night ascends
Out of the tended grass, the barberry hedge,
Swarms to the steps; and ghosts they are who lean,
Attendant ghosts and casual, in your chairs.

Most easy fact most difficult to find,
To fetch within a term, to say it clear—
As if indeed who saw the stream of sun
Angled down from eastward, and again
A west-come shaft, should trek ten million years,
Split compass to its millionths in degrees,
And still should fear his fact a private myth,
His multitude of lights have single source,
A light existing not of his creating,
A sign of source within the magnet's turning.
The slave by Egypt's monuments beheld,
The ditchman by Euphrates, captive borne
To slick the dragon bronze of Shang and Chou,
The south-born servant to the Indus lords,
Swart bearer to the Inca, dark-skinned thrall
Spear-priced to ebony princes of Songhay,
Beheld that sun and Sun beyond the sun
Which lit his heart to whispers, light transformed
By fact of birth to this insistent sound:
America, this necessary name.

"There's poets for you. Ghosts. Big words. Queer names.
This Indus, this Songhay, some time or place.
I've worries of my own. And science proves
We've done for ghosts. Your ghosts—to hear them talk
Like calculators with the cogs off gear:
'Add devil to trinity and make a square.'
Your ghost who says the devil is a whale.

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—*Illustrations by Doug Anderson.*

Your ghost who says that Daniel Webster drove
The devil from New Hampshire. Makes me tired.
If it's your kind of games, well, have your fun.
It's warm for games. The devil's maybe tired.
He's sold his pitchfork for a desk and files.
Don't take offense. I'm one for talking plain
Mind my own business. That's American."

One patent virtue in Americans,
No matter what the public-private sins,
Is patience while the guest is in the house,
However many curses when he leaves.
Be careful now. Unless you cram your ears
With dialed air and pack your eyes secure,
You run the risk tonight to hear and see
Because the ghosts are up the steps tonight,
The talking ghosts. Some grave disturbance. Where
Were you at half-past five? "Was driving home."
Alone? "No, usual crowd." Repeat your words.
"I said, 'Those other fellows boss around.
Who tells them they've got all the answers? Why
Do they need spies for fear you don't agree?
They lie to their own people. Should be showed.'
Do you agree that's right?" Indeed we do.
And of your friends? "Well, worried, some, I guess.
Guess one of them who said he was afraid.
Guess I'm afraid, I guess. There's lots of change.
You don't know who to trust. Your kids themselves—
Tell me, their father, don't know what it means
To be American since way back when."

Some grave disturbance. And the talking ghosts.
It is not to themselves they talk tonight.
Their names are Whitman, Melville and Benét.
If you'll be patient. . . . They are ear-shot near.
It is some grave disturbance brings them here.

Straight from the Bible? Beard. And blazing eyes.
He limps a little. But he strides. He says:
"Young wife trundling your cheerful child,
Old husband caressing your pipe in your work-strong palm,
Athletic boy bent to your pedal and wheel,
And you, my canny, lithe, and learnèd girl,
Each day I hear these new and anxious words,
'We are uncertain. Worried. We're afraid.'
My tan-faced children, still my pioneers,
Dare you now fear the nature in yourselves?"

Yes, the voice has changed. Three voices here.
Another voice, more harsh, more dark. Refrain,
For kindness, interrupting. All his days
He shouted and of others' deafness died.
"With terrible eyes I contemplate my book
By time's progression terribly advanced
Since first this hand, which hammered at a flag
And wound both flag and eagle with the fist,
Went down entangled into ocean—down.
Thou, Ahab, who made the sailor's needle spin
In spite of light-crossed lodestone, could repair
All navigation, courage fit to dare
The lightning fork from out the whaleman's spear,
Thou, Ahab, all knower of metals and all skills,
Thou, Ahab, grudge-pity, grudge-guarding the black mad child,
Thou, Ahab, from whom the father crept bereaved,
Thou, Ahab, whose obsessive pride sent down
Good men to death,
Who were you ever else
Than every Master save the risen Christ
In man's own self in his self-mastering?
Beware, all wit-pinched souls, you who defame
Milton's intention to Satanic man.
Beware, or to my sorrow, who declaim
My Ahab the epitome, the hero.
Thou, Ahab, whosoever proud of pride—
The beam from other's eye, not yet your own
Let not this be, or surely this last page,
My own, and set by prophecy my hand,
Hand, hammer, mast, flag, eagle in one doom,
Consumed in time and utterly destroyed."

Now the calmest voice, this voice, the third,
A gentle voice. He was but lately gone
And soonest come, most recent from the dead.
"This is a quiet street; their gardens tended.
They mend their curtains, seldom lock their doors.
Imagined and actual city.
I who had seen in the cities much and good
Had not prepared—until the nightmare reared—
My last report and written out in pain,
Reported last the termite in the steel,
Reported last the berserker machine.
And yet when young I saw a city whole,
Its heaven-high buildings steady and unharmed,
But every floor a census of the dead.
Your mighty I have loved. I have set down
Their names to keep them dear,
Those who were earnest, ingenious, oddly mad
With trusting time's redemption, who believed,
While laughing and liking a quick joke,
That love and God were good.
Being thus close to you, I grew afraid,
Seeing the dark girl whipped, the wise boy scorned,
Hearing the virus of provincial prides,
Most hard to filter, gnaw within the flesh.
Being then weary, quietly I prayed
My phantoms might be false
Here ghosts are unexpected. Here we three
Who chose a simple house,

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Who sat at ease on porches, liked the stars,
We, not balcony-built nor horse-astride,
Who find preposterous the armored car,
We take this platform on the nearest corner
And open our conference with a poor rendition—
Being a shy people, afraid of feeling,
Sing if the next one sings—give Julia's words
Set to the echo of the old John Brown.
I was young. Most deeply I believed.
But, coming on beyond my fortieth year,
Your nightmare—terribly—the cloud-splayed head."

Reflective tremor of a word once said;
Nuisance of sermons pursuing the Sunday drive . . . .
Our host is fast asleep. Or plays his turn,
A realistic snore to urge us home.
Or shudders in a chill he cannot name:
Anonymous fear, his phantom forced to give,
At gun-point, house and grass-plot; numbered slave
And trestle's sleeper, counted wood or stone
Riveted down for running of the train
To serve the Mighty State, the Useful Herd.
Honest fears, the fears he cannot name,
Cubs of Leviathan's mating. Could he strain
To sight, whatever angle of the sun,
Whatever man or woman shall enjoin
His personal will, her judgment, as the Law,
To see the Enemy in their presiding?
God give him dreams if he see Satan throned
And not unique to Kremlins but abroad
In any house or heart which over-rides
The hard live kernel of the truth hard-won
That man has dignity in being born
And no man wise to judge who should be saved.
He stirs. "I'm apt to doze. It's not too late.
I asked you up. You go ahead and talk."

Yet this new world with its old sack of crimes
Holds these words only, faith that value lies
So deep in equal fact of life subsisting
None shall presume disposal of his peers
By bigot search or pitiless coercion
Nor more by slander or the jealous lie;
Holds these words only where it may survive
The Enemy's trick and feint within the house
(Not only far, beyond an iron door)
And he will make good news of all our sins.
"The Devil can quote scripture." Yes, he can.
The Devil may win. He may. His province spans
The compromise of time. But shall we sell
Our children at his price and so destroy
Their charter, tyrant's bane, the strong branch sprung
From root in painful insight borne by one
Rejected of men? None other. Testament:
We have no duty but to speak the news,
To act the Word and leave our neighbors free
To hear or not to hear. But it is hard
To bring the heart to knees, to recognize
Within time's power the live, pernicious flaw
Wherein all nations hide the Pharisee.
Be sure the Enemy has sharper eyes
And lives in many houses, kennels down
In every den of coolest reason marched
From Order on to Empire, trained for time.
We likewise have known Order, hard-attained,
Grudged or denied in several citizens,
But we are double-tricked if we descend
To make our Order premise, take our peace
Denying the cause from which our Order came.

It may be toward the City of God the road
Prepares no way except through Armageddon,
But we, upon that road, go never sure
If we ourselves are makers of a choice
Which is no choice between corrupt battalions.
Shall we dismiss the poets, gag the children,
Deny the simple, coming to our steps
Seeking America, the battered name
Which named not continent nor pride of arms
But human dignity few arms defend?
Though wise in innocence and willing fools,
Our all and greatest giving will not be
Sufficient grace atoning for our shame.
But if the will to that great giving fail,
And the Accuser's slander weigh the scale—
Fearing his spies outweigh the fear of God—
Be sure this night we truly are afraid,
Our each Thanksgiving foul within our mouths
That undeserved a year or yet a day
The sun comes up upon one more reprieve.

If it be need again and in our days
Our children and our houses to defend,
Let it be free men freely bearing arms.
But let us be afraid if we must call
Our neighbors in this city still betrayed
In half the promises our fathers had,
Uncomfortable corrective of the Word,
Of its great reckless comfort still afraid,
So leaving the Accuser to betray
Their faith twice over in the final slaughter.
Let not our deaths be deaths of merely liars,
Higglers and trimmers in our nearest claim,
America, still necessary name.

We thank you for the use of your front porch,
Your patience with our ancient passion.
The oration, we have heard,
Is suspect, being, we are told, tedious,
An old American habit, out of fashion.

Jeremy Ingalls's first book of poetry was "The Metaphysical Sword." Her "Tahl," a contemporary epic, is regarded as one of the remarkable long poems of our time. She was born in Gloucester, Mass., has an AB and AM from Tufts College in Boston, did graduate work at the University of Chicago, and has traveled widely here and abroad. In 1944 she received a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Death in the Mirror

By Alfred Kreymborg

(*"Christ! What are patterns for?"—Amy Lowell*)

ONE was standing and staring straight ahead
Over the shoulder of a faithful maid
Standing over their mistress beside the bed
From which she had risen, staring. Nothing swayed
Beyond the hand she eyed combing her hair
In a tall mirror whose pooling silver gave
Life to its faithful images from where
It stood against a wall that was also grave.

Over her shoulder and theirs Death delayed
His partnership with breath of encouragement:
A look from his Lady through this lady sent
The girl a command to bind the final braid;
And two who were standing turned from mirror to bed
To find Miss Amy Lowell lying dead.

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Conversational Monologues

SELECTED POEMS. By Sacheverell Sitwell. With a Preface by Osbert Sitwell. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1949. 192 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

SACHEVERELL SITWELL, the youngest Sitwell, has written more poetry than his brother Osbert and his sister Edith put together—and perhaps more prose, too. His verse contains passages with great beauty of image and beauty of sound, but only a thoroughly Sitwellized reader could feel that Sacheverell is a poet who must be read complete, or even that single longer poems very often sustain themselves as unities. Their forms break and waver like objects seen under running water, while the assured voice of the poet goes on and on, insatiate of the lovely sounds he makes.

"The assured voice of Sacheverell Sitwell goes on and on, insatiate of the lovely sounds he makes."

This is true also of the rich connoisseurship displayed in his prose volumes, which Sacheverell Sitwell writes to occupy his time when he is not working on poetry, but which, taken together, are undoubtedly more valuable than the poetry. Approached selectively without regard to context, the material in these books is fascinating, the account of the singer Farinelli, for instance, in "Southern Baroque Art," or of prison cruelties in "Dance of the Quick and the Dead," but the mind rebels at giving itself up passively to the wandering course of private tastes and impressionistic association which turns these books into 500-page conversational monologues, into marvelously over-freighted familiar essays.

No loss of virtue, of representative quality, results when the nearly 600 pages of Sacheverell Sitwell's "Collected Poems" of 1936 are reduced to about a third in the present volume, with the addition of a very brief group of lyrics written in 1947. All the reader loses is the pleasure of choosing for himself, especially from some of the longer poems which have been entirely omitted. As a philosophic fable "Dr. Donne and Gargantua" can be jettisoned without regret, but some of its best scenes are well worth saving, the description of girls swimming, for instance, nearly as lovely as anything in Marlowe's "Hero and Leander." It has a fresh, healthy sensuousness which the poet himself contrasts with what is sometimes thought Sitwellism. The nectarine skin and wet, short hair of the swimmers made "greater beauty than was ever seen/Ruffled and starched in the old finery/Of hoop and farthingale and jeweled garter." "The Hundred and One Harlequins" is also totally omitted. Five of the "Twenty Torsos" are included, fourteen of the forty-four lyrics in "Hortus Conclusus," and a rather larger proportion of the remaining poems.

Osbert Sitwell writes the introduction to the present selection and Edith Sitwell wrote the very long introduction to the "Collected Poems." Both strike a defensive note. They defend their right to praise their brother as poet (Edith: "one of the greatest that our race has produced in the last hundred and fifty years." Osbert: "Have I not a thousand times longed to have been endowed with a hundreth part of my brother's creative power and sensibility.") They also define his subjects and manner against those who find them derivative and remote. In his 1948 preface Osbert is still fighting the literary battles of the Spanish Civil War. But neither Edith nor Osbert attends to Sacheverell's purely poetic faults as a lyricist, which become obvious when his work is compared with that of Elizabethan and seventeenth-century poets whom he admires and imitates: Marlowe, Lyly, Peele, Herrick, Marvell.

Sacheverell Sitwell is classical in his subjects rather than in his forms. The subjects are gardens, and pastoral and heroic scenes beautifully imaged but taken from sculpture and painting. These he views steadily and objectively, without the playful grotesqueries of his sister's early poems, but likewise without their liveliness of diction and fresh conjunctions in phrasing. Sacheverell's epithets are conventional and predictable much of the time: "cerulean blue," "clear hyaline," the "yellow manes" and "golden mien" of dandelions, the "snowy nunneries" of lilies, the "dove's low croon," and the endless murmuring through all the poems of lutes and turtles and fluting fountains. There are neither the verbal surprises of the poets of wit, nor the dramatic climactic structure of such of their poems as "To His Coy Mistress." The descriptive phrases in Sacheverall Sitwell's poems come so evenly and unnecessitously that most poems could begin or end at different points or even exchange some of their lines without difference in effect. Since their strength depends on the objects contemplated rather than on internal structure, the most magnificent poems are from the "Canons of Giant Art: Twenty Torsos in Heroic Landscapes." Of these "Agamemnon's Tomb" is best, an appalled monody on death. Here the iteration is genuinely intensive. The poet maintains a depth of feeling and masculinity of assertion that are rarely found elsewhere in his too-easy flow of limpid and liquid beauty.

Winter Rain

By Raymond Holden

AIR-COLORED water, falling, fall and find
The laws of flow in crystalline suspense,
Making you cling to trees, hang silver-dense
From wind-endangered branches, wires outlined
By parallels of pearl; making you glass
Casing the still and metal-silent grass.

This brittle desolation, this thickened shell
Might be the herbage of a ruined star,
Not of an earth, briefly crepuscular,
A moving body, for a moment still,
Pausing, mid-orbit, to peer out through space
At death's suggested but procrastinate face.

Rain, slant-silver rain, cover not quite
All hopes of little frightened ones in walls,
All upward-thrusting stems, all questioning calls
Of tomorrow-expecting birds in love with light!
Cover and seal me, rather, a man given
The ingredient of faith to make earth heaven,
The ingredient of love to make of this
Cold stillness but a pause for emphasis.

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Anthology of and About a Race

POETRY OF THE NEGRO. Edited by Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1949. 448 pp. $5.

Reviewed by JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

ONE (in this case, two) may claim the title of poet without being fitted thereby to be an anthologist. This anthology attempts to gather between covers a representative selection of poems *by* Negroes and *about* Negroes. That is, it attempts to go two ways at once, and the result is that it does not achieve its objective. The editors, who have collaborated before this on other work, have won merited acclaim for their writings, both poetry and prose. Yet their preface to this collection conveys a lack of conviction, a confusion of purpose, which is reflected in the scheme of the book itself, even if there is much to admire in its contents.

In my opinion this anthology would have gained in impact by being limited to the work of Negroes in the USA and by the addition of the very material that, on not very convincing grounds, is excluded—the words of the spirituals. Furthermore (and one wonders if this was a gesture of humility or bravado), the inclusion of tributes to the Negro by English and American writers, ranging from the visionary beauty of Blake's "The Black Boy" and poems by Mrs. Browning, Walt Whitman, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Herman Melville, down through moderns like Robinson, Lindsay, Sandburg, Stephen Vincent Benét, Ridgely Torrence, Hart Crane to Karl Shapiro, Muriel Rukeyser, Elizabeth Bishop, and other gifted poets of today, reacts unfavorably on the collection in two ways: firstly, by challenging comparison between the work of the Negro and his white advocate, a challenge that for the most part is not fully met; secondly, by inducing a feeling in the reader that the Negro, in putting forth his white apologist, feels unable to stand on his own feet as a writer, and, in this capacity, to meet his own fate. Yet, to prove that he can do so was the aim of the anthology. The second paragraph of the preface states it thus: "If the compilers had sought for a racial idiom in verse form among the Negroes, they would have concerned themselves with the words of Negro spirituals, with folk rhymes, with blues and other spontaneous lyrics. These song materials, no doubt, suggest a kind of poetry that is racially distinctive, that lies essentially outside the literary traditions of the language which it employs. But the present anthology consists of poems written within that tradition, by Negroes as well as others."

This is thinking muddled by many emotional factors, and it is impractical thinking as well. A tradition of a people is in its recorded history and its customs, and this can be ascertained not only from a body of literature but from characteristic and living folk ways. "One world" is a glorious idea and calls up a vision of many different individualities living with common purposes and common privileges and responsibilities. "The melting pot" is a bad metaphor and calls to mind the unsavory thought of the old soup-kettle with its stale aftermath. In omitting what was racially characteristic the editors have omitted what was highest poetry. I have yet to find in this collection a line as poetically exciting as "I sees Lawd Jesus a-comin/ a rainbow roun' his shoulder." This is an outburst of primitive (in the sense of pristine) visual imagination that has a close affinity to much of the poetry of the Irish, the most spontaneously poetic of English-writing peoples. A tribute to this spontaneous gift of song, "That note in music heard not with the ears . . . which stirs the soul or melts the heart to tears," is to be found in "O Black and Unknown Bards" by James Weldon Johnson, and the expression of it is the same author's "The Creation." Johnson, one of the best Negro poets, and by no means an unsophisticated man, was able at times to recapture by the synthesis of imagination the limpid simplicity of wholeness. The editors should have thrown out the bathos and kept the baby. One other note of criticism of this work as an anthology. I found the lack of a proper index of first lines and the relegation of biographical data to the back of the book extremely inconvenient. For truth's sake let me admit that all these aggravations may have been accentuated by having to read this volume from slipping and slithering galleys.

However, even though it doesn't take high rank as an anthology, much excellent poetry is to be found in its pages, poetry written by Negroes of the USA and the Caribbean (some of it in translation) and by their white colleagues among whom I am glad to count myself.

The Shallow Weirs

By Katharine Day Little

UNDER the maples and oaks, and the two-colored flowering lime-trees
Set off by tall meadowsweet, by purple loosestrife
Meadowsweet perfectly placed here and there on the edges
Loose-strife rising in spires from the center
With a sprinkling of half open water-lilies sumptuous as satin
The round black pond dreams in the summer evening.

Into it run two brooks; one plashing laughing falling
Pellucid over dark-sepia rocks and loam
Racing and running in foam through a narrow weir
Halting: and running on
Faster and faster down through great boulders
Till it ambles happily in, to add fresh coolness
To loose-strife and lilies.
The other brook runs smaller narrower quieter through dim tunnels
Carved from the heart-shaped beech-leaves.

Dead sea-captains sleep to the sound of the small running rivers
Sleep on the sweet hill-slope; brilliant Canada lilies
Cut and colored like flames
Grow by the rim of the woodside
Around the burying-ground; lulled by two brooks
Those who went down to the sea in ships
Are sleeping. On a lower branch of a maple sapling
A tiny gray bird-wing bordered with yellow
Waits till I pass;
While over small weirs tumbles the laughing coolness.

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Pull Over to the Curb

VERSUS. By Ogden Nash. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1949. 169 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

I HAVEN'T got very many of what are usually called Literary Reminiscences. But it does please me to recall that in that wonderful gilded age about 1926-28, when I used to go once a week to a famous publishing plant as a sort of editorial consultant, I saw a long gloomy-faced young man falling asleep after lunch on the desk that had been mine ten years before. In sleep his features always had a look of quite innocent purity; less equine and more Aquinas. But it was embarrassing, because the theory of that office was that the wide open ranks and serries of desks kept everyone working by mere publicity. When my friend was moved to the Madison Avenue office (after a famous merger) he was within ground-glass and plywood division, and could indulge the 2½ P. M. swoon without remark. Indeed he has immortalized it in one of his opiate madrigals.

I had of course the special sense of affection and distress one feels for the younger man who has inherited one's own kind of job. He loved the job, just as I had; he escaped from it, just as I did. But he used his after-lunch siesta to better purpose than I ever did mine. In the clear and rested ease of 3 P. M., when everyone supposed he was doing copy and layout for next month's publications, he was writing the earliest of his metrical outrages. For instance, the immortal Turtle, the Fish, the Frog, and so on. These were mimeographed by someone round the press, I don't know who, and passed about on tinted broadsides These were the prenatalia of a great ironist, and I cherish my copies as I would Lord Bacon's notes for Shakespeare's sonnets.

I am talking, of course, about Ogden Nash. He has lately published his first collection of sprung or spring-heel rhythms in six years. That has been a long time to wait. It is only eighteen years since his first little book of verse was published, and it is good to see how in that short time he has become a social necessity. He is, of course, a great temographic historian; he can remind us, better than any other writer, what has griped us in our hideous and hellbound civilization. But he plunges the needle with such generous and hypergelastic opiate that even as we perish we bless his name.

It so happens that this, I think, is the second time I have accidentally been called upon to write two reviews of the same book. (The first was C. E. Montague's noble "Disenchantment," about 1922. Mr. Nash will be excited to be so bracketed.) I wrote a brief note, for the Book-of-the-Month Club, about Mr. Nash's "Versus," in which I mentioned, to astound him, some of his predecessors. But what tickles me most about Mr. Nash is that he never even guessed he had any predecessors. If he had, they had already deceased. If I repeat myself, I repeat myself, as Oggie Whitman or Walt Nash would have said. He didn't know anyone before himself had ever been angry or amused, and so his explosion of corn and catharsis was entirely his own. He will always pull mannerly over to the curb and listen to the policeman; then he will go home and in his long lantern-jawed way make flashlight of it.

I have only one criterion for judging authors: how many are there without whom I could not possibly have lived until now? Ogden Nash is one of them. I wish I could be jealous

—*Vandamm.*

Ogden Nash—"In sleep his features always had a look of quite innocent purity."

enough to say how it irks me that he made so much better use of his naps on that shiny old desk than I ever did. The only intelligent comment to be made about any new book from this austere fabulist is, get it at once and invite a few intelligible friends for fireside reading.

The Abstract and the Absurd

IT COULD BE VERSE. By Joseph S. Newman. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co. 1949. 186 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by DAVID MCCORD

POETS are born—and if the little magazines, the big magazines, and the poetry societies are an index, they are born in this country every hour *on* the hour. Infinitely rarer than the poet is *homo supersap,* the writer of light verse. He is about as rare as *cygnus buccinator,* the trumpeter swan, though of somewhat tougher fiber. I do not think he is on the way out, but his environment is not too friendly. The little magazines are not his, very few of the big ones are, and the poetry societies by and large know him not. He differs sharply from the poet in that he is unlikely to begin his literary life by writing something on a Tuesday and selling it on Friday. A long, hard lustrum of apprenticeship is ahead of him before he acquires the necessary discipline and craftsmanship to win even a half-way decent hearing. More power to him when he does. You may be sure he has earned it.

You do not need a pair of field glasses to discover him. When you sight him, he is in focus instantly. He is urbane, amusing, precise, unpredictable, and readable. We natives, who value his survival, send up the smoke signals that announce his detection. I should like to send up the smoke signals for Joseph S. Newman. He is here among us with "It Could Be Verse," and I am not sure that I could want it better.

Mr. Louis Untermeyer has paid him a deserved and handsome tribute in a foreword to the book. Mr. Newman spans, as his sponsor claims, "the abstract and the absurd." His varied background, so a crypto-biography prepared by a friend would have us believe, is ideal for the gracious art he would practise. His reported interest and training in science are evident in the approach to some of his subjects if not in the subjects themselves. His traditional heritage is clear, but he is quite as much of a prowler in contemporary precincts as Ogden Nash, more varied in his technique (which is not to say more skilful), and a more avowed crusader. He has a fine, even, savage ironic bite to his verse, knows how to use satire, and can write—when he wants to—with the classic control of nonsense peculiar to Hilaire Belloc. It is more

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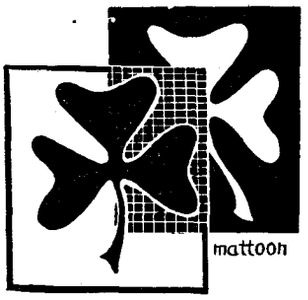
modern nonsense than Belloc's, you may be sure, and you will sample a cup in "Tea for 120 Million."

It seems to me that Mr. Newman can hang up his neon sign and begin to serve his customers. If he has something new to offer in light verse, it is the verse-version of the fabulous story which Stephen Leacock could fashion so remarkably in prose. And Mr. Newman can handle Negro dialect about as well as anybody.

Yes sah, it's all true . . . you c'n take a look;
Sez it in de Bible, fust part of Genesis . . .
Good Ole Testament, ev'rybody's Book . . .
Same fer de Cohns as it is fer de Dennises.

He can do a lot of other things, too. Some of his word exercises are not as happy as they could be in the light of



some of his other disciplines—as the reader will observe in the verse beginning "Viola owned a violin." He is best when he is terse.

The tiny shred of cosmos,
To call the matter quits,
Blew Wine and Word and Wafer
To sub-atomic bits,

Thus proving, peradventure,
We still are unprepared
To monkey with the thesis
That E is MC^2

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

WHICH ARE WHICH?

Helen Pettigrew, of Charleston, Ark., is the author of this week's quiz. Allowing five points for each correct answer, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, and eighty or better is excellent. Answers on page 37.

1. Which are fat? (a) The Ancient Mariner (b) Little Buttercup (c) Falstaff (d) Cassius (e) Katrina Van Tassel (f) Don Quixote
2. Which are horses? (a) Flicka (b) Bambi (c) Wolf (d) Lad (e) Lassie (f) Black Beauty
3. Which are glad? (a) Pippa (b) Niobe (c) Jaques (d) Bob Cratchit (e) Hamlet (f) Pollyanna
4. Which are knights? (a) Canute (b) Arthur (c) Launcelot (d) Launfal (e) Galahad (f) Lohengrin
5. Which are villains? (a) Beowulf (b) Sydney Carton (c) Iago (d) Mr. Hyde (e) Fagin (f) Horatius
6. Which are aggressive? (a) Becky Sharp (b) Wilkins Micawber (c) Amelia Sedley (d) Scarlett O'Hara (e) Dora Spenlow (f) Mrs. Shandy
7. Which are Dickens characters? (a) Mr. Square (b) Mr. Pecksniff (c) Mr. Britling (d) Mr. Pickwick (e) Mr. Podsnap (f) Mr. Deeds
8. Which are shrews? (a) Mrs. Van Winkle (b) Mrs. Petruchio (c) Mrs. Caudle (d) Mrs. Copperfield (e) Lady Godiva (f) Mrs. Jellyby
9. Which are outlaws? (a) Rob Roy (b) Robin Hood (c) Simon Pure (d) Javert (e) Roderick Random (f) Tam O'Shanter
10. Which are weavers? (a) Nick Bottom (b) Silas Marner (c) Madame Defarge (d) Thisbe (e) Arachne (f) The Lady of Shalott
11. Which went to sea? (a) Alexander Selkirk (b) Childe Harold (c) Rasselas (d) Old Kaspar (e) Enoch Arden (f) Jim Hawkins
12. Which is not a character in fiction? (a) Little Eva (b) Little Dorrit (c) Little Minister (d) Little Rhody (e) Little Nell (f) Little Lord Fauntleroy
13. Which are lawyers? (a) Macbeth (b) Mr. Tutt (c) Portia (d) Dick Whittington (e) John Gilpin (f) Silas Marner
14. Which are beauties? (a) Jane Eyre (b) Cleopatra (c) Venus (d) Galatea (e) Helen of Troy (f) Minnehaha
15. Which was a preacher? (a) Dr. Primrose (b) Charles Surface (c) Martin Arrowsmith (d) Jean Valjean (e) Edward Waverley (f) Lochinvar
16. Which are murderers? (a) Dunstan Cass (b) John Silver (c) Jeff Peters (d) Othello (e) Franklin Blake (f) Eugene Aram
17. Which died by drowning? (a) Ophelia (b) Desdemona (c) Ginevra (d) Clementine (e) Camille (f) Nana
18. Which is associated with a bird? (a) Elaine (b) Lenore (c) Cordelia (d) Margaret (e) Ophelia (f) Viola
19. Which are operas? (a) Salome (b) Daisy Miller (c) The Girl of the Golden West (d) William Tell (e) Ben Hur (f) The Magic Flute
20. Which are teachers? (a) Ichabod Crane (b) Jonathan Oldbuck (c) Uncle Toby (d) Peter Wilkins (e) Mr. Squeers (f) Nicholas Nickleby

Ingenuous Ingenuity

COLLECTED POEMS OF WILLIAM EMPSON. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1949. 113 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GERARD PREVIN MEYER

WILLIAM EMPSON'S ingenuity is so ingenuous that it is impossible not to like and respect the ambiguities in his poetry—even when it is next to impossible to fathom them. The man has such an engaging air! When he writes, in a note to one of his poems, "I hope the gaiety of the thing comes through," you hope so, too. In their venturesomeness, indeed, the poet Empson of these "Collected Poems" and the critic Empson of "Seven Types of Ambiguity" are equally boyish.

Therefore, however much I. A. Richards's favorite pupil may entangle himself (and his poetry) in his theory of ambiguity, at the same time that he is employing metaphysical wit in the manner of Donne and Marvell, there is nothing of the tortuous about him. True, his metaphors do lean rather too obviously upon the very latest mathematics and science (so did Donne's in *his* day); true, too, he finds it necessary to devote about twenty-five pages of the "Poems" to prose explication. But the notes are actually helpful and quite modest:

> . . . it seems to me that there has been an unfortunate suggestion of writing for a clique about a good deal of recent poetry, and . . . very much of it might be avoided by a mere willingness to explain incidental difficulties.

The ungenerous reader can, if he wishes, interpose a cavil or two at this point—is not Empson *too* willing to explain the difficulties in his work, as if the poems existed largely for the pleasure of explication? Also, how incidental are the difficulties? Still, the notes are notable for their frankness in setting forth Empson's method as well as his purposes. For example, he writes of "Your Teeth" (incidentally, the titles of these poems are not the least of their qualities):

> I suppose the reason I tried to defend my clotted kind of poetry was that I felt it was going a bit too far.

If Empson's poetry is "clotted," it's not because it has no discernible meaning but because it has—sometimes too much. Sometimes the meaning does not all get onto the printed page—but then, as critic Empson has gone far to show, it rarely does. If it did, the poetry would be flat; as it is, it's often unconscionably bumpy, to

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the detriment of rhythm, although most of the bumps are natural to the rugged rhythm of conversational speech.

As a poet, Empson remains distinctive. While one of the "new signatures" of 1932, he is no more an element of the Auden climate than his friend and co-signer Richard Eberhart. This despite the fact that he can do a wicked reverse on the Auden line when he cares to: evidence "Just a Smack at Auden," with its mocking refrain. For further information as to where he stands, see Empson's salute to Yeats in "Autumn on Nan-Yueh," which poem also gives the back of his hand to social poets ("The revolutionary romp") and surrealists ("The superrealistic comp./By a good student who enjoys/A nightmare handy as a bike").

Above all, here is a mind at work, examining the faces of familiar things and familiar ideas from odd and unsuspected angles, dredging up new metaphors, on occasion opening paths to sudden heights. "This Last Pain," for one, recaptures the splendid insouciance of the Caroline poets, together with some of their compelling lyric elegance:

Feign then what's by a decent tact
believed
And act that state is only so
conceived,
And build an edifice of form
For house where phantoms may
keep warm.

Imagine, then, by miracle, with me,
(Ambiguous gifts, as what gods give
must be)
What could not possibly be there,
And learn a style from a despair.

There is a mastery here which goes beyond explication.

Contribution to New Criticism

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY IN MODERN POETRY. By William Van O'Connor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1948. 278 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by ROBERT HILLYER

WE might find something to recommend in Mr. O'Connor's pages were it not for the limitations imposed by his dogmas. Unfortunately, the self-styled "new criticism," to which this book is a modest contribution, has set up fanatical taboos and hysterical idolatries.

Mr. O'Connor's reading in the group he represents is profound. T. S. Eliot does not go unmentioned; in fact, the index shows him to be the major source of reference, with no less than thirty citations, some of them pages long. Tate and Ransom tie for second place. But beyond the confines of his group and their standard preferences, Mr. O'Connor does not go. His bibliography includes only four works published prior to 1934, these incunabula being dated, respectively, 1931, 1900, 1929, and 1930. New criticism indeed!

He is not warmly interested in some modern poets. For example, his remarks on Edwin Arlington Robinson could be supplied if not amplified by any high-school student. We are informed that "Robinson, too, employed dramatic irony, as in 'Richard Cory'." Again, "Robinson, also, frequently indicates the intimate relationship between the chill New England climate and the character of her people." Lastly, "R. P. T. Coffin writes very ably of the Maine tradition, its decay and disintegration, which informed the poetry of Robinson." I should recommend to Mr. O'Connor a careful reading of "Amaranth" (by E. A. Robinson).

Robert Bridges is not mentioned. Neither is Siegfried Sassoon. Hardy and De la Mare are dismissed with a mention or two, Aiken with a handsome compliment. Stephen Vincent Benét is a "God-Bless-America" poet before "whose idealism and sentimentality . . . one feels uneasy." A few platitudes are awarded to Frost, who is unfavorably compared to Eliot, Tate, and Stevens.

Apparently modern poetry is like mistletoe hanging in air with no roots in the past. Chaucer is represented by one "ironic" line, irony being to the "new critics" what social significance was to the proletarian critics or King Charles's head to Mr. Dick. Nothing is said of our great background, of prosody, of the classics, of Anglo-Saxon rhythms.

I will now list eighteen modern poets who cannot be adequately appraised without knowledge of that background ignored by Mr. O'Connor: Robinson Jeffers (scarcely mentioned by Mr. O'Connor, whose ignorance or ignoring of the classics leads him to place Jeffers among the "followers of Whitman"—a most unlikely choice), George Santayana, E. A. Robinson, Robert Frost, Elinor Wylie, Louis Untermeyer, H.D. (not mentioned), T. S. Eliot, Horace Gregory, Robert Bridges (not mentioned), Siegfried Sassoon (not mentioned), Wilfred Owen (not mentioned), Marya Zaturenska (not mentioned), Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Walter de la Mare, and James Stephens (not mentioned).

(*Continued on page* 39)

To Obstinacy, an Angel

By Theodore Spencer

KEEP us still; still, please!
Should we ever bend our knees,
Keep them stiff in shade or sun
Till what we've said we'd do we've done;
And when we think we've done it right
Keep us thinking there all night,
So what we stare at in the sun
Seems only something half begun.
Keep us erect through night and day
So that we'll not be forced to say
"Keep us erect."
When you've done
Leave us breath to stand alone
As, blowing dust off from the stone,
Shaping the Possible from Must,
Knowing that stone is also dust,
We carve, we try to carve, we carve
The Face without whose smile we starve.

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Innumerable Friend

By May Sarton

"Ainsi du temple où seul l'ami entre,
mais innombrable.—St. Exupery

LET us forget these principalities,
Nations, governments, these mythical powers,
These real walls, these beleaguered cities;
We are theirs perhaps but they are not ours.
We move and must move always one by one
Across the perilous frontiers alone,
And what we build be builded severally.
But who are "we" and is there still a "we"
Not lost under the weight of history?
The poet, scientist, and teacher know
How fast the seeds of hate and fear can grow,
What passions can take over peaceful nations,
What anguish lurk in the safe reservations.
Can we not start at the small roots again,
Build this "we" slowly, gently, one by one,
From each small center towards communion?
Reach over the frontier stranger to stranger
To find the only sure relief from danger.
Take the immense dangerous leap to understand,
Build an invisible bridge from mind to mind;
Swung out from letters or the briefest meeting
(Lives have been changed by a simple greeting),
Build an invisible bridge toward one person.
So the slow delicate process has begun,
The root of all relationship, and then
Learn that this stranger has become all men,
Flows through the open heart like a great host
Of all the human, solitary, lost.
His longing streams through the conventions
Of diplomats and their meager intentions,
Hunting for home like a great hungry wind.
He is the one, this our innumerable friend!

Let us forget these principalities, these powers;
We are theirs, perhaps, but they are not ours.
Turn toward each other quietly and know
There are still bridges nations cannot overthrow.
And if we fight—if we must at the end—
These are the bridges we fight to defend.

Room at Dawn

By Louise Townsend Nicholl

I WAKE where all her wakings were,
With the same light the ash tree stenciled
Then, for her;
And in surprise,
The pattern of the leaves upon my eyes,
See on the wall a ghost of shadow penciled,
Her chair, its delicate double drawn
In soft delineation of the dawn.

All is in outline, faint and true and spare,
The skeletal design of leaf and chair
A sketch of bone, of essence, of intent,
The schema still discernible, unspent.
Here she awoke, as I, as surely seeing
The pure projection of her world, her being.

O Kindly Counselors

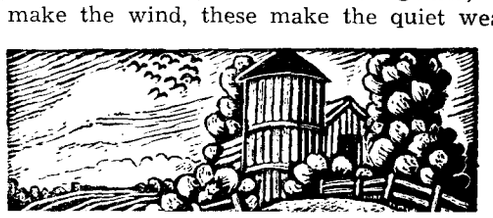
By Witter Bynner

O KINDLY counselors, who would agree
My inner with my outer amity,
Be disobliged of need to tell me when
I cannot understand my fellowmen.
Let each of us be sure of his own round,
That it is safe and circular and sound,
Before he goes to the too easy labor
Of rounding off an orbit for a neighbor.
Each one of us with feathers on his arrow
Can know a wand with damage at the marrow
Might easily turn backward for the wound.
Our days are midnighted, our nights are nooned.
To each his deep responsibility.
Count your own hours and leave mine to me.

However odd the reason seems to be,
There is a reason for anomaly,
A reason which sits inmost in a man
And circumvents his falling out of plan
With all that frames him round and yet not in
As apples rotting in an apple-bin.
Let him not choose his likeness for content
Nor yet his opposite but lineament
Which maps his own into a mingled state
By day seditious but by year elate.
Correctness is corruption at the core
Unless it be corrected more and more
By lapse and lesion and recovery,
However odd correction seem to be.

Nor would I criticize your fond offense
Taken at what I think my common sense.
It is man's business, woman's too, to know
Sunrise and noon, sunset and afterglow,
But each in his own vision, his own need:
For me a cormorant at lazy speed
Against the sun's down-going, for my friend
A wave's light lapping at the day's bright end,
For you the solemn rising of a star,
While for another none of these things are
Or could be comparable to what his thought
Has all the day considered and so bought.
Pull down a star and weigh it in a scale,
Its weight and not your handling shall prevail.

But each man to his star, not to some other,
And though it seem a meteor, do not bother
To say so if it be a star to him.
The lake moves slowly, lighted to its rim
As well by meteors as by larger lights.
Compassion moves across the darkest nights
And gains its way diversely. Manifold
Are clouds of heaven which give or take the cold
Moon in their movings over the warm earth
But are not made by man to act as birth
Or death. The only death is in not seeing
The full compassion which is fused of being:
Birth joined with death, the contraries together,
These make the wind, these make the quiet weather.



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The Lovers

By Conrad Aiken

THIS painful love dissect to the last shred:
abjure it, it will not be solved in bed:
agony of the senses, but compounded
of soul's dream, heart's wish, blood's will, all confounded
with hate, despair, mistrust, the fear of each
for what the other brings of alien speech:
self-love, my sweet, no farther goes than this,
that when we kiss it is ourselves we kiss.

O eyes no eyes but fountains filled with tears,
O heart no heart but cistern of the years—
how backward now to childhood's spring we thrust
there to uncover the green shoots of lust:
how forward then to the bare skull we look
to taste our passion dead in doomsday book!
Self-love is all we know, my love, and this
breeds all these worlds, then kills them, when we kiss.

Yet would I give, yet would you take, a time
where self-love were no criminal, no crime:
where the true godhead in each self discovers
how the self-lovers are both gods and lovers:
O love, of this wise love no word be said,
it will be solved in a diviner bed,
where the divine dance teaches self-love this,
that when we kiss it is a god we kiss.

Contemporary Artist

By Rolfe Humphries

I *AM lonely*: this, at least, I surely know.
I am important: this I must believe
With neither Church nor State to tell me so.
What can I do but hate, unless I grieve?

Given no myth, no symbol, never drawn
On any great crusade, or lofty quest,
My occupation, like Othello's, gone,
My talent uninvited and repressed,

Where can I turn, save inward and away
From all the time's corrupting platitudes,
Whose lackeys flatter, whose assassins lay
Their ambuscades in obsolescent woods?

Where can I turn, save toward the self, to find
The body and blood, the bread and wine, I crave,
The grace of reassurance for the mind,
The absolute injunction to be brave?

Men lie, and things are lied about. I must
Abstract myself from these, and for defense
Against them, put my confidence and trust
In what I have of passion and of sense

And what I have of craft, —more ways than one
To skin a cat, or keep from telling lies.
One theme recurs, when all is said and done,
Beauty is Truth, in whatsoever guise,

And Truth is always, "This is how I feel,"
And never, "This is how it is—rejoice!"
Wie sagt das sich?—gar ohne Zweck und Ziel?
Objectiveless? Not quite. Perhaps by choice,

More likely by determination, I
Given an order, share the lot of those
Who fight disintegration till they die,
And, without much composure, still compose.

Let Me Not See

By Mark Van Doren

LET me not see the one I love,
The bright one, that so blinded me;
The sweet one, that like sudden roses
Filled all evening easterly.
Let me not have those senses back
That sleep in her, and only lack
Knowledge of their captivity.

They think they are awake in me
And working, as they did of old.
And still they do with her away;
Then everything is clear and cold;
Is single, and I hear its name.
Oh, let it never be the same
With her whom clouds of love enfold.

She comes, but not herself is there.
She moves, but in a mist I make.
Oh, let me never burn away
All this between us, for love's sake.
Let my desire be even such
As darkens most what then I touch—
Sudden midnight, and fireflake.

For an Assyrian Frieze

By Peter Viereck

"I, the great king, the powerful king, king of the world, King of Assyria, the king whose path was a cyclone, whose battle was a flaming sea, I am powerful, all-powerful, exalted, almighty, majestic, all-important in power."—Inscription of 670 B. C.

SOMETIMES a lion with a prophet's beard
Lopes from a bas-relief to stretch his claws.
His bestial eyes are wonderfully sad.

Then he grows wings, the terrible king grows wings,
And flies above the black Euphrates loam,
Hunting for enemies of Nineveh.

His names are Shamshi and Adádnirari,
Tiglath-Piléser, Assurbanipal,
And the first Sargon of Dur-Shárukin.

"The day my chariots stormed the town, I waxed
My beard with oil of rose and waterlily,
And freed nine pearl-caged nightingales, and built

A pillar of skulls so high it stabbed the sun."
(Was that the tomb's voice, or the desert-wind's?
Or ours?—what ghost is still our roaring priest?)

The scribes shall say: his will outflew his wisdom.
The saints shall say: his was the sin of pride.
The skulls say nothing. And the lizards grin.

This is the rapture that the Gentiles feared
When Joshua made music masterful.
Each sinew is a harp-string crouched to twang.

The treble of such bloodlust if he pounced
Would shriek an anti-social kind of beauty
Like parrots in a gypsy carnival.

Then back to stone. In stone he sleeps the least.
It's not with love his brooding glitters so.
Earth spawns no gangrene half so luminous

As the contagion of those molten eyes.

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The Dignity of Poetry

IN the constant controversy of our time, where the voices often become raucous or shrill and any proper dignity of the spirit suffers, can one defend the dignity of an art? Do those who loudly and brassily exalt totalitarianism, or those who seem to feel that democracy connotes an intellectual descent always to the least common denominator, have any respect for a word they consider so fusty? I think there is a sense in which one may use the term, albeit the old bohemian idea of the artist still persists, and the slouchy and offhand attitude toward one's writing, of itself, seems to be considered an admirable thing.

The dignity of an art consists in a thorough understanding of its most honorable purposes, an imaginative grasp of its most exciting possibilities, and not only honesty and integrity in developing one's own particular gifts, but skill as well learned as that demanded by many a more commonplace craft. Poetry, because of certain superstitions that persist, has been, perhaps, more subject than other arts to charlatanism, both creative and critical. By the commonalty, only verse is understood, and the distinction between verse and poetry is either but dimly realized or loudly denied. Much too long have the complacent in America reclined upon the fiction of the country's frontier youth, so long indeed that we are likely entirely to lose the true spirit of the frontier. Much too long has the acquisitive instinct, dressed up, by nationwide advertising, in great significance and panoply, remained our golden calf. That there are people of quick and lively intelligence in this country, that we have developed more comfortable living for the majority, that familiarity with good writing is more widespread, seem axioms. But we still have something to learn, as a nation, of that familiarity with the arts that does not breed contempt but respect. I am not pleading for solemnity with regard to poetry! There has been too much solemnity in the wrong places. The most exalted poetry has its own province of humor, just as has the most exalted music or the highest form of any art. Greater familiarity with the best in poetry on the part of the general public will automatically restore its dignity.

I HAVE in mind the example of a friend of mine, though he is certainly a man of unusual attainment in the field of the law, who looked upon modern art and found it—puzzling. But instead of dismissing it with either a chuckle or a sneer, as a lesser man might have done, he decided to look into its reasons and meaning. Today, albeit as an amateur, he possesses a comparative knowledge of painting that might well be the envy of many.

Poetry, which does not stand still either in its objectives or its methods, demands that kind of attention; and any intelligent person can provide it, given the will and interest. Once the reasons behind method are discerned, it is by no means necessary to find them faultless. Nor is it incumbent upon the student of poetry to agree as to the value of all its objectives. But a comparative knowledge of poetry as an art, and not an avoidance of it as an aberration (an appreciation such as exists abroad, where its gods are actually neither Mumbo Jumbo or Hearts and Flowers), is essential to a country with any claim to a national culture, or, indeed, to an adult point of view.

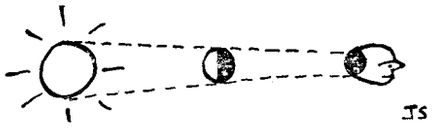
In this place I am not going to attempt to weigh the claims of older ways of writing poetry against those of the younger practitioners. It is argument of this kind that keeps an art alive; but this editorial is naturally addressed not to the practitioners or to the critics, but to the audience that I think there is for poetry in the United States, despite all evidence to the contrary.

If an art is shortsightedly considered the territory of cranks, poseurs, and those of arrested development, it has little chance to flourish. Sometimes, when I contemplate the more horrible aspects of ideologists, philosophical fanatics, statesmen, politicians, big businessmen, and militarists, I wonder where the true sapience lies! The attitude of the poet may have less to do with the uses of power; but it may, conceivably, have more to do with a comprehension of the universe in which we live. Even the scientists, in their innocent researches, came up with the atomic bomb! Though the poet's heart be only dancing with the daffodils, he may have found something better for the world.

But the realization that the universe, and the world, are continually surprising; that the horrors of life are balanced by inestimable joys discovered in what we call ordinary experience; that beauty is of various kinds and likely to ambush one anywhere; that existence has a bravery worth finding; that there is actually more to life than the gutter, the gunman's den, and the brothel; and that human beings are, sometimes, superhuman: these, and kindred considerations (despite the negation and turning toward the darkness of certain poets) are even greater things that poetry can bring to your private lives. Go for soothing syrup and treacle elsewhere! With the dignity of the best poetry you can keep your self-respect.

—W. R. B.

Atomic Age Fables



III. The Eclipse

"AND you are sure that you want the truth?" the seer asked the man.

"At any cost," was the answer.

"Let me warn you that I have never given this truth to anyone. It is too horrible," said the seer.

"You are wasting time when you should be telling me," said the man.

Then the seer told him the truth and the truth was so horrible that the day became night.

"Is this what happens when you know the truth?" asked the man. "Day becomes night? Do you see the sudden darkness around us?"

"No," answered the seer," this is what happens, my friend, when you know the truth. I see no darkness."

—J. S.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Sensitivity as Censor"

SIR: In his recent article about the censorship exerted by Jews and Negroes over characters like Shylock, Fagin, and Uncle Tom, Dr. John Haynes Holmes [*SRL* Feb. 26] asks whether Jews and Negroes should have literary immunity from the sins that beset the rest of the human family.

The answer is not far to seek. You bet they should!

They've earned it.

Jews and Negroes in the United States are ghettoized, segregated, discriminated against, and subjected to a host of major and minor humiliations. In spite of these indignities, they have contributed as much talent and character to their ungracious milieu as their hampering disabilities allow.

When it is proposed to display Fagin, Shylock, and Uncle Tom to a populace already internationally famous for its discriminatory mores, the Jews and the Negroes are certainly entitled to say to the white Gentiles, "You have no right to make our lives more difficult than you are already making them. And especially not in the sacred name of freedom!"

Dr. Holmes speaks of the "tyranny" exercised by Jews and Negroes about characters like Shylock, Fagin, and Uncle Tom. If it is tyranny—a curious word to use about Jews and Negroes in America—then the solution is to remove the disabilities suffered by these minorities, *and after that* let them take their chances with the rest of us. They do not aspire to anything better.

In its discriminatory practices official and unofficial, the United States has demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is not mature enough for such literary fare as Shylock, Fagin, and Uncle Tom. Dynamite is a useful and impressive substance, but one does not give it to babies for a plaything.

MARGARET HALSEY.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: If a less eminent authority on literary censorship and the protection of minority rights than Dr. John Haynes Holmes had written "Sensitivity as Censor," I doubt whether I would be writing now. I abhor censorship fully as much as Dr. Holmes but I submit that wanton license to defame vulnerable minorities can hardly be defended.

The word "Shylock" has been in many quarters a synonym for a Jew —and these quarters include those who sport Phi Beta Kappa keys.

Should there be an expository note on the program of "The Merchant of Venice" to the effect that the character of Shylock is purely fictional and bears no relation to other Jews, living or dead? Unfortunately, the Jews are vulnerable—so much so that the misdeed of one is charged, by some mysterious method of bookkeeping, to the entire membership of Jews, past, present, and future.

The Negroes are similarly accused of not docilely accepting the caricatures of them that their leaders are trying so desperately to wipe out. All the money, energy, speech-making, and literature employed by well-intentioned groups such as the NAACP and others can be nullified in a single second of screen time portraying the Negro shuffling, guffawing, or otherwise acting like a housebroken hyena.

If this is being "unduly sensitive," then the Jews and Negroes should plead guilty. Dr. Holmes knows that there is no possibility whatever of Englishmen being branded as Uriah Heeps or Bill Sikeses. In a word, the British are not vulnerable. The Jews and Negroes are.

It is no easy matter to rectify errors. The newspaper that libels you may retract in a subsequent issue. Will as many people read the retraction as read the libel? Will the retraction get the same amount of space? Will not some of those reading the retraction believe *at least a part* of the original story by rationalizing "Where there's smoke there's fire"?

Censorship is a horrible word. Even more horrible is the use of freedom of expression to maul and maim those minority groups who have to take refuge in censorship to avoid a worse evil.

MORTON R. SARETT.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: If we are to expect minority groups to desist in their informal censorship activities, we must also expect our mass media to furnish an opportunity for our minority groups to be more adequately represented in their presentations. As it stands now, the minority groups are trying to stamp out sins of commission. The mass media, on the other hand, are guilty of the sin of omission.

Fagin becomes important to the Jewish conscience because there aren't anywhere near enough favorable depictions of Jews in our literature to counterbalance him. By the same token, Bill Sikes does not offend the British conscience because he is so much more the exception than the rule.

CHARLES Y. GLOCK.

New York, N. Y.

"What time does the show break?"

SIR: J. H. Holmes is so very right, and yet so terribly, terribly wrong. The right to freedom of expression is the basis of human freedom and progress; but who would go into a house of mourning and announce that the deceased was, after all, only human; he lied, cheated, stole, and drank, and was moreover plenty brutal on occasion? Such behavior betrays a want of taste, a lack of heart that stamps the speaker as uncivilized. Those who would create movies with a stock Jewish villain while six million Jewish dead are hardly cold in Europe cannot be called artists, because artists are sensitive.

Minority groups are necessarily highly sensitized to danger of attack, even emotional attack. It is an essential part of the defense mechanism. To praise the secure for not showing the reactions of the insecure is pointless. The wearer knows best where the shoe pinches.

ANNE MOWAT.

Orangeburg, N. Y.

SIR: Dr. Holmes's fine unprejudiced article is what many of us have wanted to say but could not. Personally, I have become infuriated many times lately over the stupid censorship that is slowly covering us. When it reaches the point where an American is restricted in what he sees or hears by a small segment of the population

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it is time for the majority to protest. Unfortunately, any protest raised by a member outside a minority group generally receives screams of "anti-this" or "anti-that." However, we do have in the inarticulate majority men like Dr. Holmes who can state the facts of a disturbing and "anti-American" condition.

ELISABETH W. DIFFENDERFER.

Wilmington, Del.

SIR: Knowing how prone the young and semi-learned are to labels, I regret John Haynes Holmes's defense of an evil habit of identifying minorities whilst by implication laying all the evils in the world in their hands. Until we qualify Bill Sikes as "the unspeakable Christian" or the Templar as "faithless Christian," etc., let us forbear smearing all Jews with Fagin or holding them up to ridicule with Isaac of York.

LUCIE V. MERO.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: May I point out a completely false implication in regard to the nature and activities of the Legion of Decency? In the first place, the Legion is not a censorship agency. The ratings it gives are particular applications, not of positive human legislation, but of the natural law which all are bound in conscience to observe.

The official version of the Legion of Decency pledge, in use since 1938, reads as follows:

> IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. AMEN.
>
> I CONDEMN indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals.
>
> I PROMISE to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them.
>
> I ACKNOWLEDGE my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. As a member of the Legion of Decency, I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.

Obviously, this is quite a different sort of criterion from those cited by the author in the cases which he holds as similar examples of "censorship." (The basis for the classification of any picture as "objectionable in part" or "condemned" is given the first time that the title appears in the review lists which are printed in Catholic diocesan newspapers and other media.)

MARY L. WOLFE.

Glen Cove, N. Y.

SIR: . . . . To date, no one has come forth with a logical argument which will convince the rabid anti-Semite or anti-Negro or anti-Catholic of the error of his ways. And until such time as that reasoning is developed, it is not a "matter of confronting error with truth," but it is rather a matter of preventing error.

DONALD J. COLEN.

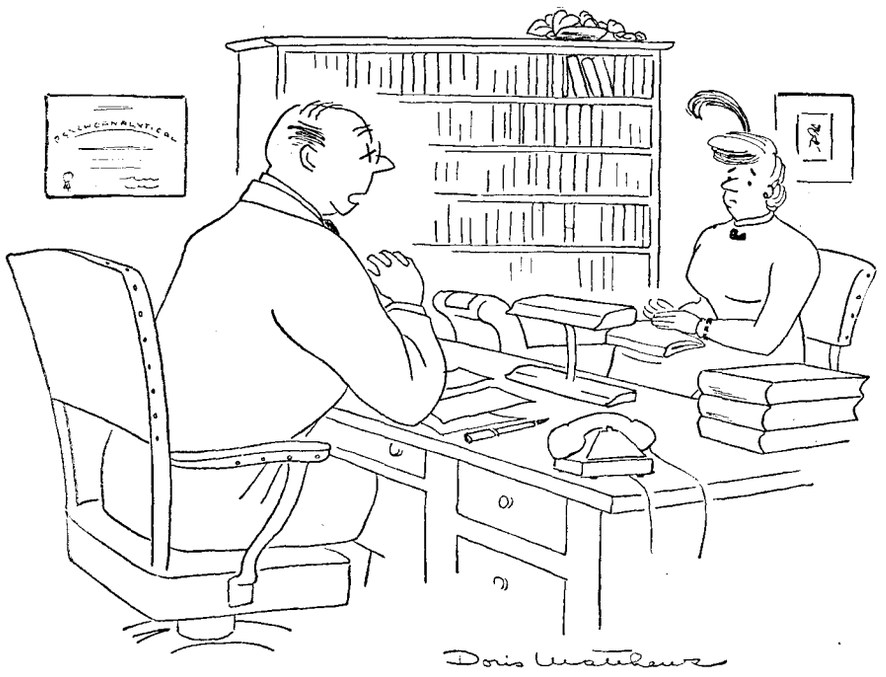
Great Neck, N. Y.

SIR: Dr. Holmes summarizes his position by a quotation from Milton: ". . . Let Truth and Falsehood grapple. Whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter!"

Minority-group leaders would appear less sanguine than John Milton about Truth's sure-fire efficacy in grappling with Falsehood. . . . In the case of "Oliver Twist," the Jews feel that it propagate, among millions, an evil stereotype of them with the unmatched vividness of film. It would be difficult, they fear, to counteract the poison by any amount of explanation. . . . . Supposing there were a plan to film "Elmer Gantry" or introduce it as a text in our schools, would the Reverend Dr. Holmes keep himself from protesting? If he would, I should credit him with unworldly forbearance.

J. J. YOSHOR.

New York, N. Y.



"First we must get rid of the idea that there is anything abnormal about this urge you have to kill your landlord."

Wide Is the Subject Matter

SIR: Your editorial [*SRL* Feb. 12]: "Unless the reformer (novel writer) has . . . Upton Sinclair's ability to defend Socialism from every point on the compass, he must pass to other subjects."

If "H. S." will consult a list of this author's novels, he will find the following titles containing no mention of Socialism, direct or indirect: "King Midas" (marriage), "Journal of Arthur Stirling" (poets), "Manassas" (American Civil War), "The Overman" (mysticism), "The Millenium" (the future), "Sylvia" (love), "Sylvia's Marriage" (married life) "Damaged Goods" (syphilis), "The Spokesman's Secretary" (Washington), "Mountain City" (Denver), "The Wet Parade" (prohibition), "The Gnomobile" (children's slang), "Our Lady" (mother of Jesus). In the list of dramas your editor will find: "The Nature Woman" (feminism), "The Pot-Boiler" (domestic comedy), "Hell" (war), "Bill Parker" (O. Henry), "Marie Antoinette" (the queen), "A Giant's Strength" (the atom bomb). There are other works on religion, psychic research, health, education, etc.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Monrovia, Calif.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We should have known better than to generalize about Upton Sinclair's sixty-odd books. His subject matter is clearly as widespread as the travels of Lanny Budd. Apologies are hereby tendered. The point behind the generalization, however, still remains valid. Contemporary literature would be richer were there fewer one-subject authors.*

English Teachers and SRL

SIR: I have made it my business to observe English teachers, and especially those who read the *SRL*, and what do I find? Sorry to say that despite the moral fiber and the Promethean protestant nature of the *SRL*, I find that the English teachers who read your magazine do not seem to catch on fire. Now, why? I wish that some practising English teachers in our schools, especially those in our high schools, would write in to answer the above question. On the other hand, where there is a teacher who seems to be in touch with the realities of life he seems to become blase, sicklied o'er with effete sophistication, and defeatistically humorous, all of which is quite sickening. These English teachers read the *SRL*, become all-knowing, chit-chat over their coffee cups about that "terr-r-rible crisis of the Atomic Age" and then go to their moral sleep. Why? Will some English teachers please answer this?

MARTIN WOLFSON.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

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Fiction. *Though there has not been any apparent religious revival in this country during these years of anxiety, the popular demand for novels in the field of religion indicates a deep-rooted desire for renewed faith. Paul Wellman's "The Chain," dramatizing the battle of a young Episcopalian priest with his wealthy vestrymen, meets this demand and, in our opinion, is headed straight for the best-seller lists. There is good fare in two unusual historical novels reviewed this week. In Louis de Wohl's "Throne of the World" sound scholarship is welded to an exciting narrative of the conquest of Rome by the Huns in the fifth century. The Norman Conquest of Britain 500 years later is the theme of Hope Munz's finely written "Golden Warrior." As an antidote to these lofty themes there is the pungent "Thieves' Market" by A. I. Bezzerides.*

Regeneration in Jericho

THE CHAIN. By Paul I. Wellman. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1949. 368 pp. $3.

Reviewed by EDMUND FULLER

TWO possible extreme attitudes at once suggest themselves toward Mr. Wellman's theme of spiritual regeneration and his treatment of it. One is cynicism. The other is uncritical acceptance. Both will be found among his readers, the latter probably predominant, through the grace of the Literary Guild and a substantial, well-disposed following. I find myself divided several ways about it, hence this report will have some of the character of a reviewer's debate with himself.

Let us take a look at the conflict in this story. Earnest young Episcopalian priest comes to Jericho, Kansas, to take over parish dominated by industrial magnates, bankers, and socialite newspaper publisher. Immediate clash: this powerful group wishes to remove church from slum neighborhood that has gradually lapped round it and rebuild in fashionable district. Priest will have none of it, aspiring to minister to the poor and needy along with the high and mighty. Vestry resigns. Understanding bishop supports priest but makes him hoe his own row. So far, this is a familiar pattern, yet at the end, when the final blow is struck by the powers, the young priest wins a form of victory not common to casual fiction and one that commands respect.

Most of the characterizations are out of the stock barrel: big, ruthless meat-packing king; his beautiful, divorced, and disillusioned daughter who is strangely drawn to the priest; the cynical, brilliant doctor, himself corrupt and a corrupter of women; crusty old Porter Grimes, the hard-bitten banker who is Lionel Barrymore to the teeth. This catalogue could be continued, but at the other extreme his Father John Carlisle is an unusual, deeply realized characterization that makes it impossible to impugn Wellman's sincerity of purpose. The stature of this central figure lifts the level of the whole gallery.

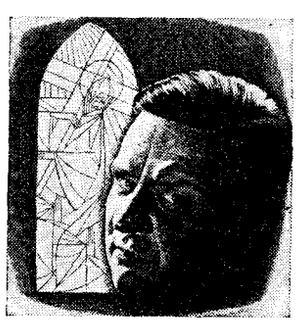
In some of the smart scenes one feels a depressing slickness; but fairness demands that we attribute some of this to the author's skill at portraying the slick. The denouement brings with it certain conversions and regenerations almost incredible. But are not such phenomena always incredible? And it cannot be denied that such things can occur.

Some of the inspirational and emotional elements have the stock touch. Carlisle's feats of grace with such persons as Big Hoob and Pawnee Mawson, and with the unfortunate Connie Foote and her widowed mother, smack heavily of Jerome K. Jerome. Yet "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" has a definite persistence as a kind of classic. Similarly, if Wellman sometimes pushes his spiritual theme over the brink of sentimentality, even Tolstoy's "Where Love Is, There God Is Also" could be charged with being sentimental unto mawkishness, but cannot be denied its place.

The symbol and device of the chain, from which the title derives, is strikingly dramatic when Mr. Wellman reveals its significance. Some will reject it as shocking medievalism, some will go Freudian about it, some will be moved.

The book is an assured best seller. It is a well-spun story, highlighted, apart from its main themes, by such a tour de force as the overwhelming description of a great tornado. If rigor mortis has not set in in Hollywood this book will give them the stuff to

THE AUTHOR: Paul I. Wellman says "the threat of starvation" is what really pushed his pen. He began his career in 1919, aged twenty-one, as a $12.50-a-week cub reporter for the *Wichita* (Kan.) *Beacon*, whose city desk he later held. In 1940, a near suicide from trying to be both author and editorial-feature contributor on the *Kansas City Star*, he retired to Los Angeles. There he whiles away mornings pounding out 2,000-3,000 words on MSS. which will eventually be a trio of novels on the fictitious town Jericho. "The Chain," second (a Literary Guild selection like its predecessor "The Walls of Jericho"), was provoked by the case of an oddly contradictory Episcopal priest and mellowed by memories of "a very wise man," Wellman *grandpère*, who was a missionary to the Cheyenne Indians. His father, a physician celebrated for his books and paintings under the pseudonym Cyril Kay-Scott, keen for adventure and field work in tropical medicine, took the infant Paul from his Enid, Okla., cradle to a West African mission at Angola, where for ten years his playmates were boomlay lads and his tongue Umbundu. He left to learn his R's in Kansas and Utah, lived a spell amid the Ute-Uintah reservation, punched cows, and sopped up frontier lore—basis for many newspaper stories and his Western histories, "Death on the Prairie" (1934), "Death in the Desert" (1935), and "The Trampling Herd" (1939). "Broncho Apache," in 1936, was his first novel, followed by "Jubal Troop," "Angel with Spurs," and "The Bowl of Brass." The last, retitled "Yonder Lies My Valley," is now a musical, with melodies by Walter G. Samuels and lyrics by Charles Newman as yet unheard on Broadway. He loves the UCLA football team, collects Americana and weapons, fishes for pike and pickerel. He works at home, where, "as a newspaperman for twenty-five years, I rather enjoy a little commotion." —R. G.



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make a really strong and popular film about a Protestant clergyman—for once.

There have always been certain technical handicaps to making a protagonist of a Protestant clergyman as compared to a Roman priest. In the latter case many problems are facilitated or altogether avoided by the complete apartness of the Catholic priest, his celibacy, and the accepted freedom this gives for lining up a love story on a parallel track without having seemed to slight the hero—at the same time permitting such love story to be as juicily secular as desired. The author has overcome the Protestant handicap ingeniously—and I think not dishonestly—in a way that commands respect for craftsmanship.

Mr. Wellman says his bit for Christian brotherhood, then in the next moment disconcertingly plunges us, I suspect unconsciously, into several distasteful passages of low, Negro-servant parody in the worst tradition of Octavus Roy Cohen.

All these unevennesses, these mixtures of the good and the shoddy, keep "The Chain" from approaching the extraordinary simplicity and uncompromising purity of purpose that characterize "Cry, the Beloved Country"—also a book about an Episcopal minister and also a best seller. Nevertheless, in its best moments "The Chain" touches movingly upon spiritual truth. It makes a sincere statement of the great need for vital change and regenerative grace in the individual. Let the unpersuaded doubt it, note its faults, suspect it, or reject it—but let it not be mocked.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 299

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 299 will be found in the next issue.

WRKUK SV JN BXUK LNU

DSUWR CJA AKCWR VCYK WN

KJQNF WRK SJWKUYCH.—M.

VCJWCFCJC.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 298

The enemy has no definite name, though in a certain degree we all know him.

—GILBERT MURRAY.

Attila, the Hun

THRONE OF THE WORLD. By Louis de Wohl. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1949. 288 pp. $3.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

"SOONER or later," says the Roman military captain to his Empress Placidia, "you will find out that there are only two real men in your empire, Your Majesty: and even of these two, one is beyond your reach—." "You don't mean yourself, do you?" "I mean the Archdeacon Leo. I think it's highly probable that he will ascend the throne of St. Peter one day."

Here, in a comparatively placid sentence, is one keynote of Mr. De Wohl's historical writing: his characters are eternally freighted with a consciousness of history present and to come. They see their shadows long ahead of them, and speak ominously with an eye to the centuries. It is this hero-centric and self-conscious romanticism which characterizes most of the historical novels in our time. This present book is Mr. De Wohl's second in that field, and I think it demonstrates that he is one of its most accomplished practitioners; for he has many qualities beyond a facile romanticism. He wields, for one thing, a very capable scholarship that gives backbone to his work; and for another, he has a flair for the creation of tension upon any desired scale. I must bear witness to having been utterly engrossed in his dynamic novel of fifth-century Rome, even while I was quite aware that it had not the intellectual integrity of the Roman novels of Robert Graves.

Aetius, the captain, spoke of two real men in the empire, himself and Leo. But there was a third man outside it who dwarfed both of them as well as all of their known world: Etel, later Attila, the Hun. This is actually Attila's book. He is its constantly vital spark and it is his career, as amazing as it is verifiable, which provides the dramatic ebb and flow it possesses. We follow Etel from his early period of apprenticeship in the Roman town of Aquileia, where he first beholds Honoria, the beautiful daughter of Placidia, and where he meets, too, the Archdeacon Leo. These two stand face to face in prophetic attitude, as Etel cries out in scornful gratitude for a favor he would rather not acknowledge, "When I burn this town, I'll spare you, perhaps—." This is an even better illustration of the heroic foreknowledge I have described above—for of course 200 pages later they stand again face to face with the flames of Aquileia behind them, razed by the Hunnish fury. Etel's love for Honoria, which impels him at last to the great onslaught upon Rome, suggests an even more serious flaw in the picture. For certainly the image of the Hun which Mr. De Wohl has created so vividly and so painstakingly—the centaur, more alive on his horse than upon his legs, the beast of prey with the appetites, the ambitions, and the ethics of the wolf—certainly this concept can only be blurred by the yearnings of a romantic love superposed upon it. Are we to believe that Attila, the Hun, the Scourge, gathered his wild hosts and swept upon Rome to reclaim Honoria, the mother of his child?

Such are the concessions that De Wohl the novelist must make to his craft. But the historian De Wohl has, I think, the final word. The fabrics of civilizations—those of the Romans to East and West and of the Huns between—are consummately woven, of the small strands of verisimilitude that make the true pattern: the ways of life of the Hunnish tribesmen, their customs and tabus, food and drink and oaths, their tribal worship of hardship and violence, bestial fearlessness, and the soft, sensuous, sicklied-over face of civilized Rome. Aetius and Attila stand as representations of two worlds in clash, and Leo, who will survive them both, completes the triangle. Mr. De Wohl has written of them with a powerful and often poetic sense of the historic forces they embodied, and he has made them heroes of a compelling novel in which history is not too badly served.

Young Girl: Annam

(Translated)

By Padraic Colum

I AM a young girl,
And I live here alone,
I write long letters
But there is no one

To send them to; my heart
Teaches me loving words to use,
But I can repeat them only
In the garden, to the tall bamboos.

Expectingly I stand behind the door;
I raise
The hanging mat; I,
The letter folded, look out
And watch shadows of the
passers-by.

In the garden the fireflies
Quench and kindle their soft glow:
I am one separated,
But from whom I do not know.

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—From the jacket of "The Golden Warrior."

King Harold & The Norman Conquest

THE GOLDEN WARRIOR. By Hope Muntz. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1949. 354 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by LON TINKLE

MISS Hope Muntz has attempted a saga-like narrative of the epic days of King Harold and the Norman Conquest in her "historical novel" "The Golden Warrior."

It is immediately necessary to stress in the above description the words "narrative" and "epic," rather than the loose term "historical novel." The work of Miss Muntz in no wise resembles either the tone or the method of most contemporary practitioners of the cloak-and-sword or chronicle romance. For one thing, her book is a minor miracle of taste, of good taste; for another, she writes of great historical characters as her principals. She does not cheaply traffic on their presence around some stereotyped mannikins or puppets whose melodramatic adventures are flawed jewels set in the ring of history. Harold and William the Conqueror and Edward the Confessor are not incidental to this bardic history; they are central.

And Miss Muntz has exercised genuine discipline in imaginatively evoking these myth-making types. Deliberately she has given her chronicle an archaic mood, though not at all a bogus or obtrusive one; and where she has to resort to dialogue, rather frequently it's true, she has obviously weighed every word and thought in the effort to be faithful, rather than picturesque.

The result in "The Golden Warrior" is a sort of epic in prose, in prose that hews to simplicity. Harold, after all, lived in days when leaders were familiarly opportunistic; but, like most heroes, he also had a code to live by. Having such a code and a respect for chivalric attention to the notion of noblesse oblige, Harold almost inevitably became an authentic figure for tragedy. He made decisions and knew them to be tragic in implication no matter what their results in terms of success.

An example: When Harold was shipwrecked off the Norman coast and taken captive by William, a condition of Harold's being set free was that he take an oath to help William succeed to the throne of Edward the Confessor. Once back in England, however, Harold reasoned that an oath taken under such conditions, a coercive oath, was not binding and that it had been his duty to England to achieve his freedom. When the High Council offered Harold (as it should) the successorship to Edward. Harold's psychological battle—and William's retaliatory undertaking of the Norman Conquest—began.

Here, and elsewhere, Miss Muntz might have broken the epic mood by spinning fine some contemporary parallels in regard to the definition of duty. She has resisted the temptation, and given her story the proper contours of recorded acts. Harold, of course, was beset by many choices that tormented his sense of nobility. He had to banish his brother Tosti. To accept the throne, he was compelled to renounce his common-law wife, Edith Swan-Neck, and the children he loved. Of Harold's devotion to Edith—and also of his suavity with his later queen-wife, Algyth—Miss Muntz makes a touching and wholly human portrait. With all her taste and restraint, she yet contrives to suggest a more passionate relationship between Harold and the lovely Swan-Neck than has ever been explicitly stated about any of a hundred other couples in recent historical fiction.

Inevitably, by being faithful to the record, Miss Muntz has drawn her figures to epic scale. A more modern complexity of motive would have made them less grandiose. But this is the price she has paid for her exquisite kind of taste. This is straightforward narrative of high events, devoid of tinsel adornment and written with the sense of anonymity that Flaubert wished for fiction.

It does not seem likely that any great body of present-day readers will greatly value what Miss Muntz has set out to do. But like Harold, who was not the conqueror, Miss Muntz may have other satisfactions.

Trucker & Trouble

THIEVES' MARKET. By A. I. Bezzerides. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1949. 233 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HOLLIS ALPERT

SOME years back, A. I. Bezzerides published a novel called "They Drive by Night." It was made into a film starring Humphrey Bogart, and thus a considerable section of the population was acquainted with some of the tribulations that truck drivers are liable to encounter. His second novel now adds more detail to the milieu he has chosen to explore and, in addition, we are given a rather dreadful glimpse of the workings of the wholesale produce market in San Francisco. With "Thieves' Market" Mr. Bezzerides firmly takes his place among "the boys in the back room" of the American novel, and there isn't much doubt that he has produced a superior work in the hard-boiled genre. James M. Cain and Horace McCoy are, at times, pushed aside by his hard-bitten pen.

It is the life of the independent trucker which is portrayed this time: the man who owns his own truck, buys a load of the crop he hopes is at a premium on the market, hauls it to Washington Street near the docks in San Francisco, and sells it for whatever price he can get from the produce dealers. The process looks simple, on the surface—until you meet up with someone like Mike Figlia, a wholesaler well versed in the tech-

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niques of fleecing an unwary trucker. Mr. Bezzerides has a way of getting you deep into the petty intrigue of Washington Street, and he doesn't let you out until you're thoroughly convinced that "Thieves' Market" is by no means an overstatement.

His story is mainly concerned with the unsentimental education of Nick Garcos, a young man who decided to enter the independent trucking business. Nick was working in a California packing house at the time his father died, leaving four thousand dollars of insurance money. Nick hated his job, wanted to get out and be on his own, and after his father's cremation he got to thinking about what the old man's life had amounted to. It had been a hard, frustrated life, with an unfulfilled dream of some day becoming a produce trucker and owning a fleet of trucks, all with the same legend: "Yanko Garcos and Son, Fruits and Produce."

The first half of the book moves along more leisurely than the latter part, and contains the best writing. You get to know Nick Garcos and the Greek family background he's part of, and the occasional home life of Ed Kennedy is portrayed with bitter and realistic flavor. And there's one remarkable chapter about the purchase of two truckloads of apples from an old apple farmer. They're golden apples, two weeks ahead of the inevitable glut on the market. Right now, Nick and Ed will be able to get three times what they pay for them, if all goes well.

But all doesn't go well, and the rest of the book is about that. For a while a well-created atmosphere of foreboding hangs over the night journey to San Francisco, but then the plot gets geared into high, and there ensues a sort of *Grand Guignol* performance as Mike Figlia, a prostitute called Tex, and some of the market hangers-on combine their various talents to get Nick's precious load of apples from him. Through them Nick gets his baptism into the ethics of the marketplace. He loses everything but his truck, but he learns what he must give up of himself in order to stay in the business.

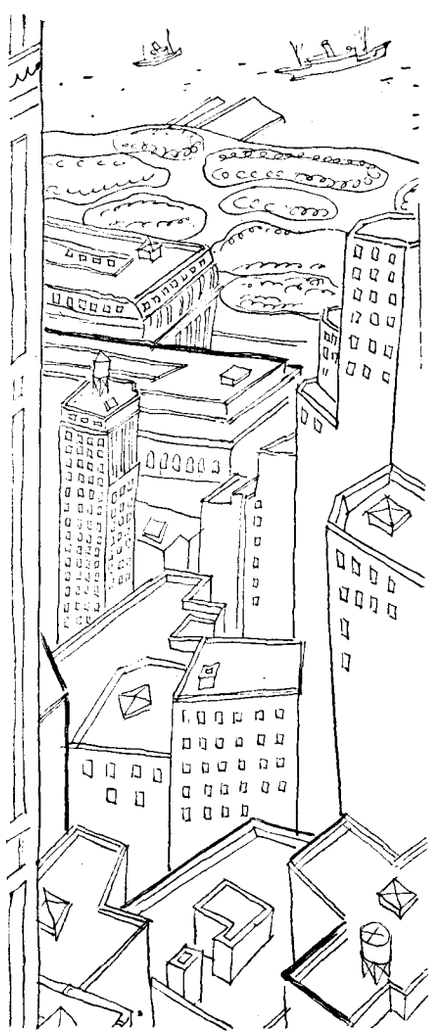
Mr. Bezzerides knows how to give you the sights and sounds and smells of this life. His dialogue is pungent and crackling, and he manages to race his story along like a truck going down-grade. Sometimes the venomous atmosphere grows too heavy and rich, but most of the time the book keeps its verisimilitude. His point of view underneath it all is not cynical, but grim and protesting, and for all the hard-boiled quality of the writing Nick Garcos's plight comes through as a very real and poignant one.

A Woman Condemned to Pleasure

BLAIR MARRIMAN. By Percy Marks. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1949. 282 pp. $3.

Reviewed by EDMUND FULLER

THIS latest novel by Percy Marks is about a woman described as "condemned to pleasure." She enjoys the possession of millions, skilfully administered for her by a battery of attorneys so that she need not lift a hand over the management of her affairs (though it is true that she does have to bear the cross of coping with maids and social secretaries). Her friends include the great of the theatre, art, and musical worlds, by all of whom she is admired as a consummate hostess and social blender. As we leave this unfortunate woman at the end, crushed, weeping, and despairing under the burden of this situation, I am forcefully reminded of the famous remark, attributed, I think, to Herman Mankiewicz about the similar dilemma of the rich and famous hero of the backward-running play "Merrily We Roll Along." "The problem of the story," Mankiewicz explained, "is how the hell did the poor devil ever get himself into this mess?"



—From the jacket of "Blair Marriman."

Now, of course, the discovery that Mr. Marks has stumbled upon is that wealth and health are not enough. What Blair Marriman lacks is love. She has had a life rich with opportunities for it. It is not that she has muffed these. She completely lacks the capability of loving.

Mr. Marks's method of exploring this case is rigidly deterministic. The curse is put on Blair by her mother's neurotic horror of sex. When her mother dies, Blair is intelligent enough to throw off this influence in her conscious mind but the subconscious dirty work is done. She acquires as stepmother a remarkably fine woman to whom she had been devoted prior to the marriage. But the manifest happiness of her father and his new wife both repels Blair and arouses her jealousy.

The girl is endowed with all the superficial qualifications for success, including selfishness. Yet it seems to be her fate to be a reflector rather than an originator. Her stepmother lays the groundwork of good taste for Blair, tactfully and unobtrusively. Gratitude for this quickly turns to resentment. This education is furthered by the rich artist Rex Vinton, whom Blair marries. All her life she is to feel herself the prisoner of a canon of taste imposed upon her by others, but which she cannot discard for she knows its value.

Various relationships raise for her the haunting question of who thus-and-so reminds her of. In the case of her good husband Rex, whom she virtually did to death by her cold, dutiful submissiveness, she was reminded of her father: a discovery she appears to make, forget, and make again. Later, when she tries desperately to find in Todd Manning the fulfillment she has missed, another reminder bursts upon ner with a surprise quite wasted upon the reader, who has long since perceived the method and foreseen the pattern.

I fear this tale of Blair's slow progress toward the crowning realization of her diamond-studded desolation, slickly constructed though it is, is an outworn theme and unprofitable. The cut-and-dried method deprives the book of the only thing it might have offered—a really live, complex study of a woman, psychically crippled, starving herself in the midst of plenty. This is not achieved in the present account of Blair Marriman's loveless, golden life.

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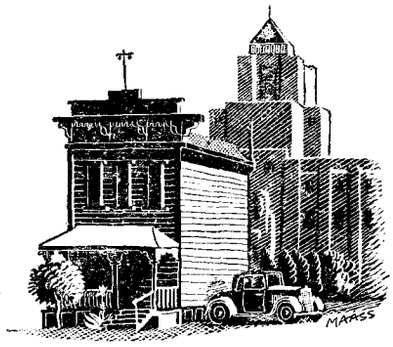
Echoes of Angelus

WOMAN OF THE ROCK. By Hector Chevigny. New York: A. A. Wyn, Inc. 1949. 283 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

HECTOR CHEVIGNY'S "Woman of the Rock" is prefaced by the conventional brief warning: "Any resemblance to any person living or dead is entirely coincidental." It is then a coincidence that his heroine, blonde and beautiful Ruth Church, founded a religion of sorts, built a Temple in Los Angeles, and was the greatest revivalist preacher of her day, during the years when blonde and beautiful Aimee Semple McPherson built Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, and eventually blew out of it in a cloud of scandal. It is also coincidental that the author worked in Hollywood for years and must have known Angelus Temple, "The Home of Four-Square Gospel," inside and out. Aimee McPherson is, of course, a perfect subject for a satirical novel, but a most difficult one if it is written without humor.

Mr. Chevigny's Ruth Church, later known as "Mother Church," which is enough to make any good Christian Scientist shudder, became an evangelist by accident. After a brief experience as a girl with a religious racket in Los Angeles which sent her uncle and aunt to jail she married a hard-shell Baptist preacher. When he was murdered for interfering with the local manufacture of moonshine whiskey, Ruth takes over his church and discovers that she can make any audience shout "Hallelujah." After she



stages a barn-storming revivalist tour around the Middle West, the growing city of Los Angeles takes her to its heart, the Temple is built, and the money from what H. L. Mencken used to call the boobeoisie pours in. Unfortunately, she is vibrant and passionate, as well as beautiful, as the blurb on the book jacket states. When she runs off to a love nest in Oregon, her private life becomes sensational news for the entire nation. The author leaves her dead and entombed in a curious edifice she had built for herself overlooking the ocean.

Mr. Chevigny attempts to make of this fantastic story a serious study of a woman whose gifts as an actress and a showwoman overwhelm her conscience. Did she, indeed, believe in anything except her own powers to stir huge audiences and turn religion into a vast spectacle, a theatrical show? The fact that the author believes that she was a true believer in the power of emotional words to bring sinners to God is not sufficient. The reader may not be convinced that this fabulous story is worth writing, except as a sardonic glance at revivalist religion or as a choice example of Americana.

Non-Com Communist

THE POST OF HONOR. By David Dortort. New York: Whittlesey House. 1949. 315 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by DAVID DAVIDSON

AN interesting refresher course in the moods and morals of the "Whittaker Chambers period" in the Thirties, when well-meaning Americans by the many thousands could be persuaded that the path to social decency lay only by way of the Kremlin, and that scruples were a mere matter of bourgeois sentimentality, is offered in this second novel by Mr. Dortort, author previously of "Burial of the Fruit."

Not that his hero, Max Gerard, had anything to do with secret documents, microfilms, and other such topside shenanigans of the GPU Hitchcocks. A boy from the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, Max never got higher really than the status of a non-com in the Young Communist League. His proudest boast—in the outlandish argot of the party—was that he was "agit-prop," or director of agitation and propaganda for "the largest branch in Brooklyn."

But even from his worm's-eye view Max could become aware finally of the cold, callous, power-hungry methods of the party and its topkicks. What held him to the party for as long as he stayed, and what must have similarly influenced men who even became spies and document thieves, was that the party did indeed give the appearance of being out in the vanguard of many worthy causes. It was a time, as we tend to forget in the heat of the Chambers revelations, of mass unemployment, starvation wages, and evictions. And for those who, like Max Gerard, wanted to "do something," the party offered a complete blueprint. Of course, it made a certain demand in return—blind, unquestioning obedience. Whoever was rash enough to think for himself on any issue could count on being cast out into the darkness as a traitor to, not the party bosses, but "the toiling masses."

For a while Max bravely stuck his head out where the police clubs were falling thickest. What began to get him down was the cold autocracy of his immediate leader, Barney Price. While the movement could lose many of its disillusioned Quixotes, Max began to think, it would never lose the Barney Prices.

It took a few steps more for Communism to lose Max himself—the callous capitalizing of the death of a

(*Continued on page* 43)

Spirit to Maker

By Laura Benét

LET me come!
I have waited long and long
On interminable earth,
Longer with each new rebirth.
Languished within fettering walls,
Slaved upon the banks of streams.
In factories by whistle calls,
On icy mountains courted dreams.
Yet never found the dream to carry,
Never, never reached my quarry.

Let me come.
My cries rose in birthing gloom,
With starving children as they wept,
In the dying's smothered room.
Where underground the gold was kept,
I played in reeds a plaintive child,
Served my land as warrior, priest.
In the unfathomable wild,
On thrones, I judged the greatest, least.
Now worn and used like rusting wire,
I have only one desire.

Let me depart a fiery sun,
A cooling wind in sulking heat.
Give me freedom, Mighty One
From this body, this heartbeat.
It is fearful to be human,
Grievous to be born of woman.

Yet at any anguished cry,
Let me alight, a friendly bird,
Where uncomforted men lie,
Let me be a lifting word.
Out of your chaotic space
To fashion them a small green place.

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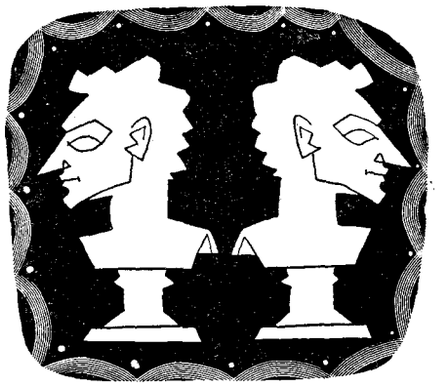
The World.

The number of public men who have made enduring contributions to literature is exceeding small: Caesar, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Bacon, More, Pepys, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lenin, Nehru—there are a few more, but not many. If there is a man alive today whose name seems destined to join the group, it is surely Winston Churchill. While we await the second instalment of his history of World War II, "Their Finest Hour," due early next month, Churchill's publishers offer evidence in "Maxims and Reflections" (reviewed below) of the rare extent to which he has enriched our language. . . . Another important new book is "Freedom of Information," in which Herbert Brucker diagnoses the ailments of the press and prescribes some remedies. In "Shalom Means Peace," Robert St. John reports enthusiastically on a recent look-see at the new state of Israel.



Churchill the Phrase-Maker

MAXIMS AND REFLECTIONS. By Winston S. Churchill. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1949. 176 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

THERE is a long-forgotten Victorian book called "Gems from the Waverley Mines," in which an industrious anthologist has culled from Scott's novels precisely those passages of moral wisdom that most clearly obstruct the plot, and which most readers conscientiously skip. Colin Coote and Denzil Batchelor, who have combed Winston Churchill's life and works to produce this little book, have at least avoided that trap. What they have culled is pithy, witty, pointed, often moving. They have produced an admirable anthology of what one may call the climax Churchill—the debater, the phrase-maker, the enricher of the language, the man who is sure to have much space in twenty-first-century volumes of quotations.

The compilers would be the last to maintain that they have presented the whole Churchill. No man can be judged solely from what he is like at the top of his form. If you really want to know Mr. Churchill at first-hand, you must read his current memoirs, his memoirs of the Four Years' War, called "The World Crisis," some of his speeches, some of his historical writings, preferably the life of his great ancestor, Marlborough. But this anthology is an interesting one, a book that can be dipped into with pleasure in the briefest of intervals.

It belongs, indeed, to a somewhat old-fashioned genre, the "wit-and-wisdom," the "gems," the carefully arranged excerpts from the works of the great man. This, as our example from Scott would indicate, is a favorite Victorian literary device, now not often used. It may be, indeed, that we nowadays want our great works even more thoroughly predigested in the form of textbooks, condensations, summaries, and the like. At any rate, the book has an old-fashioned flavor which, on reflection, one realizes is singularly appropriate to Mr. Churchill, really the last of the Victorians.

Mr. Coote, who contributes a lively thirty-page introductory essay on Mr. Churchill, would probably not agree with this judgment—or he might accept it as one more panegyric on his hero. The essay is cheerful, informal, and admirably suited to the purpose of an introduction. It gets the reader ready for what is to come—Winston Churchill, never more than a few hundred words at a time, on himself, on Russia, on war, on Britain, on his likes and dislikes, on foreigners, on politics, on human conduct. Mr. Coote, following a line not unhewn before him, disavows the intention of treating Mr. Churchill impartially. Impartial writers he finds of "sickening prolixity and dulness." He prefers the broad brush, whether "charged with whitewash or with tar." He is less than fair to himself. He does indeed use a broad brush, but with a full palette of colors. Nothing so flat as whitewash would ever suit Winston Churchill.

The Poet as Tightrope Walker

By Richard Eberhart

THE poet as tightrope walker moves from stage to stage,
High in the air, a hundred feet over the circus.
It is not so hard to do as it may seem:
He hews to an imaginary, pent-house line.
He carries a long pole, weighted at either end,
Which makes his body, in fact, extra-ordinary.

When you look up you are catching at suspense
And spectacle, commending unusualness;
We admire his balance in our lack of it.
He seems a superior being, proud and free,
Whose reward is pleasure of impersonality.
But yes, but no—secretly you wish him to fall.

The tightrope walker, without a pole or parasol
Could not do it, or not in this grandiose way,
Without the advantage of his accoutrements.
His arms are so long, and his feet so in line
That his eye has abolished the hook of fear.
His perfection is our meticulous instruction.

Far above the circus, to which he is indifferent,
He plies, year after year, his extraordinary trade,
His head in the clouds, like a sleep walker,
A scientist of impenetrable calculation,
And apparition of a dandy with a classical grace.
His fall is always mentioned in the press.

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Truth on the Press

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION. By Herbert Brucker. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1949. 307 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by DON HOLLENBECK

PEOPLE keep talking and writing about what is wrong with our media of information, saying that something ought to be done about it, but nothing much ever seems to happen, constructively, anyway. What does happen is that the press goes on its majestic way, sometimes blindfolded, it would seem, and almost always deaf to the repeated comments that its slips are showing. If it does answer, it is usually that it knows its own business better than any highbrow theorists do, and that it would like to see them handle the problem of meeting edition times. It can't very well snoot Mr. Brucker that easily; he has had experience of journalism not only as a member of the journalism faculty at Columbia, but as a working newspaperman; he is presently editor of the *Hartford Courant*, where they meet edition times seven days a week.

"Freedom of Information" is a history of journalism as well as a critique, and it endeavors to demonstrate that while we have made a lot of progress toward a truly free press, there yet remains much to be done, to which one would add a hearty amen. Mr. Brucker would make no change in the position the press occupies in our economic system; he discusses and discards for adequate reasons such substitutes as a municipal press, a professionalized press, a yardstick press, a press without advertising, an endowed press, a church press, a labor press. What, then, would Mr. Brucker have the press do to mend its ways and to get more in touch with the people? He says there must be a sharp change of purpose and direction by corporations that operate our newspapers, radio, moving pictures, and other means of mass communication. We shall not, Mr. Brucker says, have freedom of information until we make a courageous leap into the future by broadening the tradition of objectivity to include not only news but the interpretation of news. Briefly, he'd have all editorial opinion, columnist punditing, cartooning, features, commentaries done in what he describes as a spirit of scientific inquiry to the search for truth. He'd have publishers and controllers of other media of communications cut all political and economic ties; sponsor no partisan doctrine, no cause at all but that of independent

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creatures, they must become devoted, almost in the religious sense of the term.

But devoted also means doomed, in one sense, and while it would indeed be almost the millennium if our information were served up to us and interpreted for us by a group of unearthly Galahads without an axe in the world to grind, on the basis of things as they are and as they seem destined to be for a long time, Mr Brucker's hopes would seem to be doomed. He has more than likely read an excellent story by J. Howard Rutledge in a recent edition of *The Wall Street Journal;* that story appeared under the headline: "Newspaper income lags behind soaring costs; battle for readers on." And Mr. Rutledge then proceeds to detail the plight of the press in terms which leave no doubt that a publisher's life these days is not a happy one. The realist (and the newspaper business is notable for the hard-headedness of its practitioners) will set Mr. Brucker's hopes and dreams against the cold print of the facts, and come pretty quickly to the conclusion that just as long as the business of information is so inextricably bound up in the economic system, just that long will the entrepreneurs of the information business continue to think in the light of their own self-interest.

Mr. Brucker does suggest a possible way out—one which would seem deserving of more attention. That's the plan under which the employees of a newspaper run it—really run it because they own its stock. That's been tried a time or two, but not to the extent where it can be said to have exerted much influence generally, and, as Mr. Brucker points out, some of these plans leave control in the hands of one or two top employees who are so free from a check on their decisions by the rest of the employees that they are just as conservative as if they owned the newspaper outright.

On the day the city editor and the police reporter and the editorial writer have a definite voice in making the policy of a newspaper, we may be said to have made some real progress in the direction of freedom of information—and that goes of course for other media of information and the men who have the job of saying what is to be said, and showing what is to be shown. That will be a wonderful day. Maybe some of us will live to see it.

Don Hollenbeck conducts the weekly program "CBS Views the Press."

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The Promised Land

SHALOM MEANS PEACE. By Robert St. John. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1949. 335 *pp.* $2.95.

Reviewed by Bartley C. Crum

ROBERT ST. JOHN has here written a thoroughly needed, enjoyable, and moving account of the people of the new state of Israel. It is a stirring continuation—with a pleasant ending—of the stories of the survivors of Dachau, Buchenwald, and the human abattoirs of Rumania. And it tells, in addition, many tales of the Sabras, those native Palestinians who did so much to save the Middle East from Nazi invasion. Mr St. John, indeed, tells quite literally hundreds of stories about the people in that corner of the world. They include those of Irish-Americans, French Catholics, and boys of many other non-Jewish groups who helped in Israel's bitter fight for freedom.

Mr. St. John flew to Israel last May, shortly after the withdrawal of British forces and the dramatic establishment of the new state with David Ben-Gurion as Premier and Dr. Chaim Weizmann as President. He had decided to witness the birth of a nation and to watch its struggles to keep

Citizen Saint

By John Holmes

OME ghosts, they say, deplore their ghostliness,
Wail and complain and weary of their haunting.
Hard fate, to wander always at a loss,
To want and not know how to tell their wanting.

So saints are sad of the world and wonder why,
Tired after two miles with him who asked for one,
Bruised by the rain of I, I, and me, and my,
Torn between possible and the little done.

Let thieves, chemists, ships, and shouldering boys
Be doomed to stretch and move as they were meant.
Who suffers his weather, savors jails and joys,
If not the saint when told he is a saint?

That innocence of heart in which he moves,
That effortless patience carrying the day,
That selfless grief of those he loves,
Dooms him to sainthood, and no need to pray.

This is a most serious occupation, rare
The man who makes it his. Rigor without rules,
Daring in doubt, no pay, and endless care,
And sufferance not gladly of himself and fools—

Who'd waste his love the crazy way the world
Wears, murders, spoils, and rubs itself to dust?
The born saint, for so his unborn body curled.
The family, citizen saint, because he must.

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alive. Like most nations, the birth of Israel was not normal; it was Caesarean. Mr. St. John's numerous vignettes of the Israeli people are hence necessarily against a background of violence and of war. This background adds drama and interest to his stories, because the people of Israel live within their boundaries pretty much as if they were at peace, although the overtones of war are constantly present. There are, of course, pure stories of the war; how, for example, the members of the Kibbutz of Mishmar Kaemek helped to save the Valley of Esdraelon and the city of Tel-Aviv from falling.

With the coming of peace, which is foreshadowed by the successful armistice between Egypt and Israel, there is bound to be a vast revival of civilization in the Middle East. Israel will be the center of that civilization. Mr. St. John's emphasis on the people of Israel, rather than upon the political forces at work in the Middle East, is a happy emphasis. We have need to understand these people, and to realize that they have brought back with them to Palestine the whole code of moral values upon which Western civilization implicitly stands.

Although St. John was in Israel only a few weeks, he has unquestionably captured the spirit of the people. He liked them, and quite plainly, they liked him. As he listened to them in their homes, on the beaches of Tel-Aviv, in Haifa, in Jerusalem, he learned—and authentically—their way of life, their sharp sense of humor, and above all, their determination for a future of peace.

Mr. St. John's prose style in "Shalom Means Peace" has been criticized as now and then "embarrassingly sugary." The criticism has a certain validity. He does, indeed, seem to go overboard both for the country and its people. Tel-Aviv is a "city of unbelievable color." The blue of the Mediterranean "seems to be a deeper blue than the color of the same water seen from Greece, Spain, France, or the African countries." Here, "Nature's reds seem redder than anywhere else; her scarlets more flaming, the perfume of blossoms more intoxicating." Yet no other contemporary book I have read gives such a vivid impression of the color and flavor of Israel as it exists today. And I think, as one who

has been in Israel recently, that most of Mr. St. John's enthusiasm, as evidenced by his adjectives, is warranted. From the cab-driver in Tel-Aviv to Moshe Shertok in the Israeli Foreign Office at Hakirya, from the conducting of the Palestine Philharmonic by Izler Solomon to Marie Katz, the artist, the story is the same; boundless determination to build in Israel a good and pleasant life. As Mr. St. John says, "the spirit of this place is extremely contagious. I have met Englishmen who came here as agents of the British Government and are remaining to help the Israelites build something for themselves."

"Shalom Means Peace" was published just as real peace is being established between Israel and her Arab neighbors. The nation which Mr. St. John wanted to see born is alive and healthy. Many of those of whom he writes will now have their opportunity to help this people attain greatness in a land at peace. In writing of them as he has, Mr. St. John has given us an understanding of them and of their problems; an understanding we need in the hard days which lie ahead.

Bartley C. Crum, attorney and publisher of the late New York Star, *was a member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine. His book, "Behind the Silken Curtain," is a report on his Palestine mission.*

The Winter Mind

By George Marion O'Donnell

THE face seen first in autumn light,
Remembered by the winter mind,
Is colored against the common white
By blazing trees and the hills climbed.

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Seeing Things

BITING THE HAND

RUTH GORDON was wiser. When in "Years Ago" she wrote a comedy about a young girl's leaving home to become an actress in New York, she did not attempt to disguise that it was about herself. Her heroine was identified as either Ruth Gordon Jones or "Me." "The Big Knife"* might have been a better play had Clifford Odets followed Miss Gordon's example.

He, too, is writing about himself; writing bitterly and angrily about Hollywood and the years he spent there. But, instead of speaking for and through himself as a disenchanted dramatist on the Coast, he has elected to make his central character an actor rather than a playwright. He has done this in spite of the fact that his script is as personal as a first novel. The substitution proves a fatal one.

That actors may be idealists, that some of them have strong political beliefs, that they follow careers which mere money-seeking can blight, and that they must all face difficult personal problems, I do not deny. But that the inner anguishes of the average screen star are of the same size and kind as those which torment a writer of Mr. Odets's convictions and intensity, I do question.

Ideas are not the first concern of players. Their job is to make the thoughts and characters of playwrights live, and at this they excel. Their best thinking is apt to be done about and within their own profession. In spite of their humanitarian impulses, they are, as a rule, more enlightening when "The System" they discuss is Stanislavsky's, not the capitalistic.

If for these very reasons Mr. Odets weakens "The Big Knife" by building it around an actor instead of a dramatist, he makes his play the more unconvincing because of the type of actor he has chosen to write about. His central character, through whom he ventilates his hatred of Hollywood, is a figure for whom it is impossible to feel either sympathy or respect.

Supposedly, he is a man who has retained his "integrity," even though his great talents have been wasted by the studios. Just what this integrity amounts to, it is hard to discover. When drunk, he has run over and killed a child and, in order to hold his job, he has not only permitted his studio to hush up the whole affair but allowed his best friend to take the rap and go to prison for him. Yet, thereafter, he never once seems to think about the child he has slain or to do anything for its parents. The way he rewards his blindly trusting and self-sacrificing friend is to sleep with this man's wife. Nevertheless, we are expected to feel sorry for him, callow, egocentric, and verminous as he is. This sympathy would be difficult to muster in any case. It becomes the more difficult when the major dilemma confronting Mr. Odets's actor appears to be whether he should or should not sign a fourteen-year contract that would yield him some three million dollars, that guarantees him a bonus of $25,000 for each picture he makes, and that grants him the right to refuse any script which he deems unworthy of his genius.

Mr. Odets's lesser characters, in other words his additional means of expressing his loathing of Hollywood, include a sulphurous, semi-literate producer who is an utter egomaniac; a female gossip columnist of the nationally syndicated variety; an oily and ruthless henchman who combines the more anti-social features of Dracula and Richard III; a blackmailing chippy whom the studio's big shots have determined to "erase" since she knows the real story of the star's killing of the child; a playwright given to speeches so literary that the ink still seems wet on them; a none too scrupulous agent; the weakling who is the actor's stand-in in jail, the Kinsey queen to whom he is married; and the actor's wife who is as liberal in her thinking as she is in her doses of sleeping pills.

IT is people such as these, the scum of the earth, who inhabit Mr. Odets's Hollywood. The play they infest is as active as a trayful of Mexican jumping beans. Almost as pointless, too. It is a silly, overwritten, and turbulent affair. Yet it is not without its interest. Again and again flashes of the old, the welcome, the exceptional Odets talent shine out. In spite of the inadequacy of his story and his characters, there is a communicated, almost frightening sense of Mr. Odets's own unhappiness. Few scripts have made me more uncomfortably aware of the inner despair of the authors; few have left me more apprehensive about their writers' immediate future.

Lee Strasberg has staged "The Big Knife" admirably. Howard Bay has

—*Vandamm.*

Paul McGrath and John Garfield in a play "as active as a trayful of Mexican jumping beans."

**THE BIG KNIFE, by Clifford Odets. Directed by Lee Strasberg. Setting by Howard Bay. Costumes by Lucille Little. Presented by Dwight Deere Wiman. With a cast including John Garfield, Nancy Kelly, J. Edward Bromberg, Paul McGrath, Reinhold Schunzel, Joan McCracken, Theodore Newton, Leona Powers, Mary Patton, Frank Wilson, etc. At the National Theatre. Opened February 24, 1949.*

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set it sumptuously. John Garfield obviously takes its actor hero as seriously as Mr. Odets does. Such players as Paul McGrath, Reinhold Schunzel, and Joan McCracken acquit themselves creditably, and J. Edward Bromberg, as the wicked studio magnate, gives a performance piloted by his usual authority and skill. But the drama, a problem play leading to its hero's suicide in the bathroom, raises many problems Mr. Odets fails to answer.

Among these is just why Mr. Odets should himself, as an intelligent adult, have been so surprised and scandalized by Hollywood. When he elected to go West, he must have known that he was not heading for the Garden of Eden. There were those returned travelers who had circulated such a report even before, fat contract in hand, he arrived there. Hollywood did not need a war to become one of the world's most blitzed capitals. Since its studios first mushroomed, bombloads of abusive words have been dropped on it. Novelist after novelist has attacked it, usually in books as feeble as the films they were making fun of. Dramatist after dramatist has mocked it in plays that were failures, or in a few successes which laughed rather than frowned at it.

Mr. Odets did not have to go to the Coast. He chose to go. What in the Thirties were thought to be his leftist interests did not prevent him from cashing the capitalist checks Hollywood unquestionably paid him. Certainly, he was too knowing a man to persuade himself that any lot on which he found himself would be a combination of the Group Theatre, the Moscow Art, the Old Vic, Utopia, Brook Farm, or Coleridge's and Southey's dream of pantisocracy. He must have heard of the place's "Snake Pit" aspects. Having made his own compromise, he must have been prepared for further compromises.

That Hollywood has its faults, can be Mad-Hatter mad, produces more bad pictures than good ones, is not peopled exclusively with angels or intellectual titans, and is not as great a cultural center as the Sorbonne, everyone knows. But Mr. Odets appears to have had an even bitterer experience than the thousands of others who, quite voluntarily, have made the same profitable trek. He must have got in with the wrong set. There are plenty of self-respecting, intelligent, decent, and amusing people to be found out there, Evelyn Waugh notwithstanding. They just happen to be utterly realistic about their jobs. Mr. Odets seems to have been not only unrealistic about his but strangely ungrateful, too.

—John Mason Brown.

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THE MUSE—WITH YANKEE ACCENT

(Continued from page 9)

And like a fortune-teller's
their marrow-piercing guesses are
whatever you believe.

But on the Navy-Yard aerial I find
better witnesses
for love on summer nights.
Five remote red lights
keep their nests there; Phoenixes
burning quietly, where the dew
cannot climb.

Fresh perceptions of contemporary life are related to an ancient symbol. The restraint of the poem adds to its suggestiveness. The poem partakes of that excellence present in Miss Bishop's longer poems.

Richard Wilbur's "The Death of a Toad," not included in his first book, "The Beautiful Changes," is reprinted from *Poetry*. It employs a small creature for the large purpose of evoking the significance of death:

A toad the power mower caught,
Chewed and clipped off a leg, with a
hobbling hop has got
To the garden verge, and
sanctuaried him
Under the cineraria leaves, in the
shade
Of the ashen heartshaped leaves,
in a dim,
Low, and a final glade.

The rare original heartsblood goes,
Spends on the earthen hide, in the
folds and wizenings, flows
In the gutters of the banked and
staring eyes. He lies
As still as if he would return to
stone,
And soundlessly attending, dies
Toward some deep monotone,

Toward misted and ebullient seas
And cooling shores, toward lost
Amphibia's emperies.
Day dwindles, drowning, and at
length is gone
In the wide and antique eyes, which
still appear
To watch, across the castrate
lawn,
The haggard daylight steer.

The last example is Ruth Herschberger's "The Lumberyard," from her first book, "A Way of Happening":

We watched our love burn with the
lumberyard,
Bats in their wheeling showed our
crazed sense,
We stood in fields where weeds with
chiggers scrambled,
And stood the heat flush in our face,
immense.

Softly the crowd acclaimed the
devastation,
And we, we smiled to see the embers
twist,
Tottering towers and poles with
flashing wires.
We shifted feet when shifting
structures kissed.

Up in the sky the stars were red
sparks shuttling,
Planes with a scouter's appetite hung
by.
And at our backs the Negro huts were
lit
With yellow mist, a ghostly gaiety.

Sound above all: the cracking and the
crocked,
As bones that, whetted by the warmer
flames,
Edged into death, until the crimson
glow
Vanquished the knotted amber
boards, the names.

All banished, all decided, all cast in;
Far back beyond, the trees made
silver white
By steaming flames, rose as cold piles
of cloud
To cool this mirror of the blazing
night.

And we beheld, we watched, as drunk
as all,
And gladdened when the bursting
peaked and sprung,
Rejoiced to see the threat of fire win,
And sang to see the worthy timbers
wrung.

We watched our love burn with the
lumberyard,
Magnificent the sight, the sin, the
shame,
The vice profusely lavished; wheeled
the bats
Silent as we, but crazed, crazed as the
flame.

The quiet, even tone of the poem is never destroyed, although within it there is a variety of images and actions, real and symbolic. There is no lapse into sentimentality, as there is no heightening into excessive or violent feeling. The poem is controlled in form, a mature statement about life, presenting the doctrine of an impersonal destiny as the controlling force superior to and destructive of individual will.

These are random poems by contemporary poets. They reveal an American idiom, they strive toward basic realities, each in its own way. They show a variety of images and skills, satisfying or not as the reader may judge. They are not chauvinistic. What qualities in contemporary poetry, not limited to these examples, may prove to be representative of the Forties it is for the reader to determine. I have merely sought to point out some features of American poetry as I see them.

Richard Eberhart attended Dartmouth, St. John's College, Cambridge, and Harvard Graduate School, and has taught at St. Mark's School. His books include "Reading the Spirit," "Song and Idea," "Burr Oaks," "Poems New and Selected," and the recently published "Brotherhood of Men."

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DONAGH MACDONAGH

(*Continued from page 11*)

That once looked eastward into the
wind's face
To glimpse a clearing sky. The rain
is theirs
Who, wearing the various bodies of
Viking or Celt,
Saxon or Bristolman, walked with the
head
Unbarred in the evening light. Close
underneath our buildings
Lies the Dublin that endures.

It is the Dublin of historical happenings, "the Dublin of old statutes, this arrogant city" that, in another poem, he claims for his natal place, not the folk Ireland that other Irish poets claim to belong to. In the poem named "A Revel" his hope is that he will have "no aged ghosts struggling out of the grave" for his guests.

But it is out of the graves of seven men buried in quicklime that the most hopeful words come. This is in his radio play "Easter Christening." Here one born on the day of the insurrection goes through the city striving to find one who will declare what inspired the leaders to their desperate action. People in the streets have forgotten what that action meant or know only the relics of it that are in the museum; a survivor thinks of it now and again only as one of the fervent moments of his youth; others are still denouncing it as a traitorous attack on a great establishment. It is the dead who give the answer:

You are the dream we dream, here
in the grave,
We burst apart the artifice of age,
And wrote our history on the nation's
heart.
We plucked the future out of the
reach of time.

In *Poetry, Ireland* recently a critic objected to translations since the 1600 period. The objection was based on the idea that the translators only repeat what the older Irish poets have done, that absorption in the folk prevents the new poets from creating a modern style, and that, anyway, those who are interested in Irish poetry can now read such poems in the original. There may be something in the objection, but many will be glad to read the versions that Donagh MacDonagh has made of "An Caisideach Ban" and "Death and the Miller."

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. (b), (c) & (e). 2. (a) & (f). 3. (a), (d) & (f). 4. (c), (d), (e) & (f). 5. (c), (d) & (e). 6. (a) & (d). 7. (b), (d) & (e). 8. (a), (b) & (c). 9. (a) & (b). 10. (a), (b) & (e). 11. (a), (b), (e) & (f). 12. (d). 13. (b) & (c). 14. (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f). 15. (a). 16. (d) & (f). 17. (a) & (d). 18. (b). 19. (a), (c), (d) & (f). 20. (a), (e) & (f).

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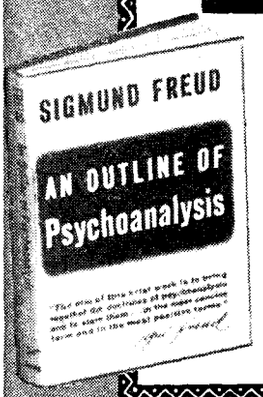

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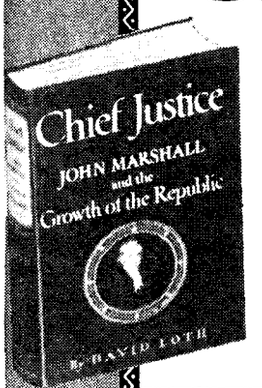

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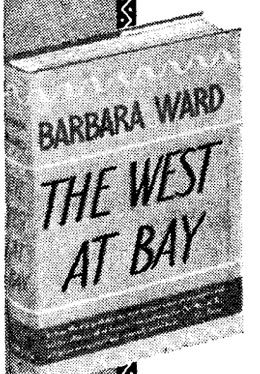

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Person in the World

By Edith Henrich

WHEN every wrong that she had ever done
was doubled by suspicion, multiplied
by such convulsive questions as the self
can ask of self, requiring that the answers
condemn to make the pardon surely whole,—
when these were all laid out, there was, he said,
no hope for his forgiveness.

Then she knew
that hope for something she would never have
had grown to be horizon for her eyes,
a line around the world. People and things
had had existences within a frame,
constructed by her dream of reaching him.

And now she watched the world diminishing,
the fabulous circle round reality
closed in, erasing town and house and room,
converging to a point within herself.
Sun shone on nothingness; the privileges
of simple animals who love their lives
were lost to her; their ways of going forth
involved the claim of life on space and time:
the tentative paw is hope; the lifted wing
is hope; the leaf's slow push upon the air
a kind of hope, a trust in outwardness.

If her thoughts were travelers, they were stranded
in frozen country; if her wishes were
dancers, they were stopped as still as pictures
of dancers, and their very breath was paper.
Freighted words the healthy send abroad
did not move from the silent terminal
her mind was. All the flowering provinces
changed to a summer she had not predicted,
and unintended fruits were harvested.

The world, when she awoke, was beautiful
beyond what she had known; impersonal
the valley lay; her private night had been
no natural revolution among stars—
no single flower had closed beneath her dark.
The earth had waited well: identity
held each rock still, designed each different tree,
perfected everything with separateness.
Free of hope's horizon now, space held
impartially the shell and marginal star;
three dimensions were the ornament
each object wore, the only fact of grace,
and realness was the honor of the stone,
the ant, the stallion, and the living girl.

Standing beside the table in her room,
clutching the hard bright maple in her hand,
she learned the wood; she learned the yellow bowl,
the purple grapes; as though it were a lesson
she learned the solid measureable chair
from which the world went out in all directions.
That things should wait for sorrow to be over!
That matter should have such patience with our tears!

She saw the good of each created thing
of all that does not change, all that endures
while suffering happens: wood, wool, glass,
paper, and brass, the substance of her flesh.
She blessed the open book upon the table,
the hand that touched the printed page, the arm,
shoulder and breasts and body, thigh and foot:
she was a person standing in the world!

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(*Continued from page* 19)

It is doubtful that this book will be reviewed with the aloof indifference described by Matthew Arnold. Those who do not believe that T. S. Eliot is the final and almost the single authority, who distrust terminology as such, and who insist on a perspective extending beyond a few decades, will find the book pretentious and shallow. Those in the family circle of the new criticism will find it one of the most enchanting gifts of their perpetual Christmas. Yet one should remember that mistletoe, though pleasant to kiss under, is, after all, a parasite.

Old Themes Renewed

THE EARTHQUAKE AND OTHER POEMS. By John Theobald. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc. 1948. 123 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GUSTAV DAVIDSON

WORKING largely with traditional patterns and employing themes that have been the poets' stock-in-trade since time out of mind, John Theobald manages nevertheless to infuse into his labors a freshness and variety which are both welcome and restorative. The impact of an individual voice striking against the old sounding boards is always a stimulating experience for the eye and ear. If one requires additional evidence that art generally achieves its best results within self-imposed limitations, this volume offers such evidence.

In "The Earthquake and Other Poems," his first book, Mr. Theobald frequently invades the no-man's land of syllabic meters and atonal harmonics; but even here he rarely goes off the deep end. It is as though, coming on an unsuspected vein of music, he has devised new and adequate instruments to work it. As he declares in his introductory "Word to Men and Angels," this poet has sought on the one hand to avoid the "muddy, spasmodic discriminations" of Wordsworth and, on the other, the "spreading explosions of a Dylan Thomas." In this double intent he has not failed. While there are apparent consanguinities with the experimental moderns (Day Lewis, Auden, Barker, and others), Theobald by no means plays the sedulous ape to any of them. He sings without strain or artful circumvention.

The book is divided into six sections. It opens with the title poem, a twenty-three-page dramatic dissertation in dialogue, with three characters—Christian, Voice of an Angel, and Girl—the chief protagonists. Christian now and then assumes a double guise (himself and Angel), and there are additional angels and an indeterminate host of demons coming in toward the end as a sort of abetting chorus. The second section contains four lyrics, including the five-page "Sun of England," the others running to no more than a page or two. Sections three and four comprise eighteen lyrics of varying length. Section five includes the unusual "Kingdom of the Air." The final section is given over entirely (with the exception of a concluding sonnet) to the poet's "New Venus and Adonis," an ambitious take-off on the Greek myth, with proper credit to Shakespeare's version, which serves the present versifier as model. Here Venus is the forward daughter of a New England waggoner, and Adonis a Harvard youth, a sober and modest "fellow of books," described further as "bashful but frankly in the embrace of beauty/incongruously calling on duty." The way of a man and a maid is pursued in the well-known fashion, with results equally predictable. The handling of the theme is sensuous, witty, often colloquial, with bounce, nacreous tints and racy observations on scholarship, the tug-of-war technique of sex, and the weather. An intellectual glow, compounded of worldly cynicism and bucolic rapture, plays over the whole.

Mr. Theobald is no perfectionist. His ear is often unsure. A closer attention to the mechanics of rhyme and rhythm would have rounded out some rough edges. But the defects are mainly those inherent in work which is spontaneous and perpetrated for the nonce. Poems like "England 1941," "Home Front," "To Wilfred Owen," "F4U-1 Fighter" are wrought out of a drive for saying things worth saying, and saying them strikingly.

This is an excellent first book, with much that is powerful, memorable, and sometimes haunting.

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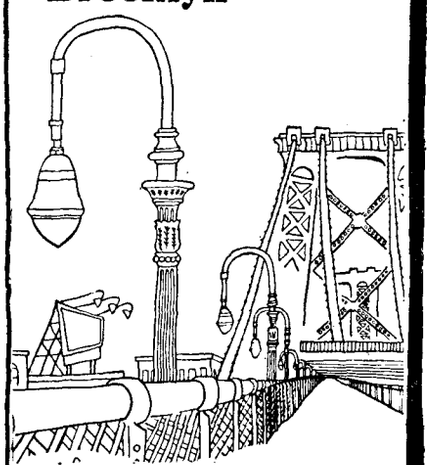
Life and laughter in a beautiful place called Brooklyn



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Back to Elizabeth

SELECTED POEMS. By Elizabeth Daryush. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1948. 63 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by
SARA HENDERSON HAY

IF, as was recently suggested by a young poet, traditionalism in poetry today is as much a revolt as free verse was in the nineteen twenties, Elizabeth Daryush is one of the foremost of rebels. Her "Selected Poems" are distinctly Elizabethan; many of them have a Herrick-like grace and simplicity, as in "November":

Faithless familiars,
summer-friends untrue,
once-dear beguilers,
now wave ye adieu:

Swift warmth and beauty
who awhile had won
my glad company,
I see you pass on. . . .

A few of the poems are stiffly rhetorical and too formally poetic; they seem reproductions rather than genuine antiques, like the sonnet beginning:

Sunless November, how has thou now turned
To drear appraisement all our bright employ!
Sad visitor who com'st but to destroy
With one chill look our summer-wealth late earned . . .

More often, however, Mrs. Daryush wears her Elizabethan rue with the difference of her own distinctive personality. There is an engaging roughness and vigor about:

The woman I'd revere
would be a warm hearth-fire,
not a chilly taper
posed for all to admire,
a white saint in the gloom,
but the heart of a home . . .

And the man I'd love, too,
though he'd be a sure light
in the house, a help through
the things of trouble's night,
would be more than a tame
measured glow without flame . . .

The daughter of the late Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, Mrs. Daryush has been interested, as was her father in his "Testament of Beauty," in syllabic meter. According to Yvor Winters, who wrote the foreword to the present volume, "the principles of syllabic meter are simply in theory: the line is measured by syllable-count and must not be measurable by any other pattern. The poet is thus required to vary the number and pattern of stresses from line to line, and to do it in such a manner as to create a successful rhythm; he is at the same time free to rhyme unaccented with accented syllables, as *heiress* with *bless*" (or as in the above quoted poem, *revere* with *taper*). This doesn't seem to me really a very radical or deliberate technique; it impresses me rather as something that ought to be done spontaneously and where the case arises, instead of with premeditation. The effect, to me at least, is one of unstudied, unselfconscious simplicity. Perhaps, as an art, it has to *seem* unpremeditated, and is achieved by great care. The Elizabethans and the old balladeers used it often; I think it has much charm, and Mrs. Daryush employs it with apparent ease. Her poetry has a delicacy and a quiet lucidity which I find quite lovely. It is not the kind of thing, perhaps, that devotees of the contemporary school of poetry will particularly admire; it is distinctly the technique of another day, slight, graceful, full of archaisms and stylized inversions, often much less simple than its apparent simplicity suggests. And she can occasionally introduce a startling modern image with great effectiveness, as in the last line of the concluding sonnet in her book:

Children of wealth in your warm nursery,
Set in the cushioned window-seat to watch
The volleying snow, guarded invisibly
By the clear double pane through which no touch
Untimely penetrates, you cannot tell
What winter means; its cruel truths to you
Are only sound and sight; your citadel
Is safe from feeling, and from knowledge too.

Go down, go out to elemental wrong,
Waste your too round limbs, tan your skin too white;
The glass of comfort, ignorance, seems strong
Today, and yet perhaps this very night
You'll wake to horror's wrecking fire—your home
Is wired within for this, in every room.

Spoiling Crane, Eyeses & Refreshments

THE WAR POEMS OF ALAN SWALLOW. By Alan Swallow. New York: The Fine Editions Press. 1948. *Unpaged.* $1.

THE FOREVER YOUNG. By Pauline Hanson. Denver: Alan Swallow. 1948. *Unpaged* $1.50.

THE UNDERSEA FARMER. By Barbara Howes. Pawlet, Vt.: The Banyan Press. 1948. 40 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

OF THESE three contributions to the contemporary *corpus poeticum*, only Miss Howes is really ponderable. Indeed, Mr. Swallow's "War Poems" can be dismissed at once: they deal with the war, it is true, but they are not poems. Composed with a singular infelicity of structure and tone, relentlessly commonplace in content and expression, they only occasionally manage to rise to the level of competent verse. The lapses are horrific: "How many admiration names!/Stevens, whose head is rich and snug;/And Carlos Williams, alter ego;/Van Doren, Ransom, Auden, Frost./And Hardy, Robinson, old Yeats,/And spoiling Crane among those dead/Who speak our language yet." Who is Carlos Williams, one asks, and of whom is he the alter ego (perhaps of William Carlos Williams?); and in what sense, if any, is Crane "spoiling"? No; Mr. Swallow's pegasus is strictly horse.

Miss Hanson is a far better craftsman, but her work is scarcely less depressing. "The Forever Young" is a sequence of sixty-four quatrains dealing with love-in-death and death-in-love: love for whom (or what) unspecified—no names, no dates, no contours, no particulars. The quatrains themselves are harsh in diction and ungrateful to the ear; but this I take to be calculated, as though the poet were trying to strip her lines of all ornament, of all affective appeal, in order to contemplate better the substance of her poem. Unhappily, the result is not so stripped and bare as it is dehydrated, and matters are not helped by the periodic intrusion—it is a trick of style—of the chintz-turbaned, antiseptic ghost of the late O. Khayyám. At least one rime is too memorable to be kept from an eager public: "Where the body is its spirit, lies/Beyond the body's farthermost surmise;/But wonder-wounded, it of its death surmises/What you see now with your unseeing eyes." The rimes are so insisted upon, jumped on, that the temptation to read "eyeses" is not to be resisted. Again, no; well-meaning, but dead on arrival.

It is refreshing to turn from these exercises to Miss Howes's exquisitely printed book, and the refreshment is not wholly derived from the contrast. True enough, eyeses jaded by spoiling Cranes and unattached alter egos respond appreciatively to these accomplished pieces; but there is more than

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competence here. At least four times in "The Undersea Farmer" we find finished poems of considerable merit —"The Sport of Boys," "Indian Summer," "The Lost Girl," and the title poem itself—and many of the others have passages of memorable force. The technique is aware and skilled; the structure—"The Lost Girl" is a good example—is subtly designed and harmoniously realized; the poems—the best ones—are passionate *saying*. The faults are solecism (Miss Howes is even capable of writing, "Some morning I will be old"), syntactical confusion, and, more seriously, a kind of jeweled preciosity of diction not far removed from archness. But these are remediable defects, irritating only in that they interrupt enjoyment of so much that is good. "The Undersea Farmer" represents the emergence of a limited but highly gifted poet.

The Crow

By Louis Kent

(*The crow, black not from grief.*—Anglo-Saxon riddle.)

THE crow flies up, the crow black not from grief
Yellow eyed over waves of tossing leaf,
Yellow beaked over nestling trees, this thief

Whose yellow eye jeweled the winter gray,
Whose lean ellipsis pointed winter's day
And winter nights returning passed his way—

Night could not darken darker than in him,
At daybreak, poised on the bare, brittle limb
Red suns were blotted from the morning rim,

And sucked of light those cold suns could not die,
Round, red and tired that went down the sky,
All burial turned in his enduring eye—

Now under seas of leaf who thrusts his wedge
Of faultless black along the wavering edge
Of fields and flicks the trembling sparrow hedge;

Who moors his raft among the paler seas
That pour through the frail fingers of the trees,
And nests alone the swaying distances:

Now swift and fierce out of the froth of leaf
Against the cruising gray-eyed hawk, thieves' thief,
The crow flies up, the crow black not from grief.

Compulsive Scholar, Extraordinary Latinist

By Merrill Moore

HE was always very careful about his dative,
He was careful about his ablative absolute,
He spoke in Latin more carefully than a native;
He said very little that anyone could refute.

He was in fact a very careful man
Or had been so at least since we had known him,
He was careful when he walked and when he ran,
He gave us little reason to disown him.

He was so careful, careful about what he ate,
He was very careful about what he wore.
He was careful not to argue or debate,
He was careful not to be timid or a bore.

He was very careful about what he did.
He never told us what his caution hid.

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THE DARK PEOPLE

THEY are the traveling tent-folk, here and gone.
Like Buttadeus they have wandered far;
From the five-waters-land in the world dawn
Trailing through Egypt under a falling star;
Tsingani of Persia, nomads of the Nile,
Those of the dark blood known in Muscovy
With their wild music, voices cleansed of guile
Varying, blending a melodious glee
Strangely alluring; these the ocean-tossed,
Sailing the broad black water to the isles,
Vivid at English fairs, whose palms were crossed
With silver, those with daggers in their smiles,
At pub or course to toss the cannikin
Or whistle a piebald from a farmer's field,
Their tawny women to *pen dukkerin*
Or proffer shawls and trinkets well-concealed.
They are God's cuckoos tolling in the grove,
The chaffering roguish birds whose souls are free,
Such thieving ones as bark-brown dryads love,
Scattering the patteran of Romany;
The Petulengros, Lovells fabulous,
Coopers and Hernes, Stanleys and Scottish Faas;
Anselo, Ursula, Tawno, Pyramus,
By dingle fires, on beds beneath the stars.
The van, the grazing *gry*, the tinker's trade,
The sorcerized cat-gut whipping fiddle-chords;
Bees in the marigold, saints in masquerade,
Horse-tamers, Pharaonic overlords
As were no Pharaohs of red desert noon!
Sunset and sealine all about the earth
From Northern Lights to Mountains of the Moon
Have known their clatter, melody, and mirth.

These the Word Master kenned, the Romany *rye*,
The philologue (and poor philogynist!)
Who fought the Flaming Tinman, and made sigh
Tall golden Isopel he never kissed.
He knew them in all humors. Tan and van
Were open to him. Many a bird-peaked eye
Gleamed with the hope his greeting "Sarishan!"
Meant "parl o pani, av' kushto mir' akai!"*
Carew, the cozener, was once their king.
Among their fires trod Wortley Montagu.
Bulwer abode their tents with youth at spring.
Their Romany *jib* Leland and Kester knew;
For Cairo's Rhagarin, who cast the shell
Of auspice, kinned the Indiana *chai*.
Apray the rom! Cry on Boro Duvel,
Lord of the Road! The world is rolling by . . .

Leaves on the pale weir-water drift to shade;
Brown faces pass, white teeth and glittering smiles.
Now a great orange moon surmounts the glade
Lighting the *gorgio* to more dusty miles;
Yet still the Magyar music that can swell
Where singers to the marvelous czardas move
Borne to ethereal heights or howling hell,
Makes all the night vibrate with gypsy love . . .

Bear-wards from Syria pass; then Kingston Fair
With thimblerig and drums and shouts and flags,
Cocoanut-shies, baskets and foreign ware,
Seems all about the traveler. He lags,
He kneels beside a rill to gulp with thirst
The clear leaf-shadowed water. Still he sees
Hop-poles in Kent, races on Molesy Hurst,
The scarf of some yet young Meg Merrilies.
The dark men have enthralled him, and their maids
Whose bell-like voices call from van and tan.
The moors, the furze, the hills, the moonlit shades
Throb forest yearning of the wild tzigane.
Far down the road the Egyptian pantherine
Writes in the dust. Her golden earrings gleam.
Even where ocean foams upon the dene
He hears the chuckling of a woodland stream.
Gramarye of all nature fills his mind.
The wandering ones have cast the ancient spell.
Till many a long dark league be left behind
The man goes charm-struck, though the end be well.

* "Come over the waters, O love wherever you are!"

* * *

The Beechhurst Press of 296 Broadway, New York City, has brought out the geo-metric verse of Gerald Lynton Kaufman, many of whose poems appeared in *SRL*. Mr. Kaufman has called them "poetry forms in mathematics written mostly for fanatics," and the way he lettered them shows his skill at the draughting-board, which is natural as he is an architect. He is also a magician and a puzzle-maker! He wrote a book on puzzles back in 1940, and he edited a syndicated daily newspaper puzzle feature. He has been an active member of the Society of American Magicians for twenty years. "Geo-metric Verse" is worth your buck and a half because it's like nothing you ever saw before (unless you saw it in *SRL*!), and when you brace up to a "Squarody" or a "Zerode" you believe in the magician status!

* * *

I've been sent a tear-sheet from *Science* for January 28, 1949, which prints in full, in its Comments and Communications, an editorial by S. Kaftanov, Minister of the Higher Education in the USSR, published in its entirety from *Izvestia*, September 8, 1948. It publishes it, *Science* does, "in the belief that it has high informational value for scientists in America." It has, and for all of us. It is in support of the Michurin biological theory and against the Mendel-Morgan school of thought. If anybody wants scientific theory advanced in this unscientific fashion, with a thorough mental purge of the opposition going along with it, so that everyone will think entirely alike, this is the stuff for them. I can just hear the steady tread of "Left, left, left!" (Well, how could I put a "right" in?) Lysenko forever! Thanks to the Bolshevist Party, and, personally, to Comrade Stalin, ways for the further triumphant march of the most progressive Michurin biological science are now clear. The scientists of our colleges will apply, from now on, all their energy to the propaganda of Michurin's biology and to the support of undivided rule of Michurin's biological doctrine in our higher institutions of learning.

You think I'm kidding? No, I'm quoting direct. Those last two sentences are the peroration of the editorial (beginning with "Thanks to the Bolshevist Party . . ."). All I say is, you'd better not be a "deviationist" if you're a Soviet scientist!

It really seems unbelievable in this Einsteinian day and generation!

—WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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FICTION

(*Continued from page 29*)

fellow-fighter in Spain, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the rush of comrades to spawn babies so as to secure draft exemption, and the manner in which one particular party leader applied his party training to become an officer-tyrant in the Army.

The "post of honor," Max concluded finally, lay not among the power seekers but the freedom lovers.

While the author is thus indisputably on the side of the angels, he cannot be said to have told his story with any special skill or art, unhappily. The prose is filled with distressing mannerisms, the characters are all too often made of wood, and the whole effect is strikingly reminiscent—in reverse—of the proletarian literature which had its brief vogue in the Thirties. What Mr. Dortort has given us is a switch on the "conversion" novel: the hero becoming uneasy with his current set of beliefs, the hero beginning to think for himself, the hero suffering the consequences of dissent, the hero striking out on a new line, come what may. Only the destination has changed—freedom, instead of dictatorship of the proletariat. The dynamics remain curiously the same, with the exception of a couple of excellent chapters on life on an Army hospital ship.

David Davidson is the author of two well-received novels, "The Steeper Cliff" and "The Hour of Truth."

Two Hearts in Tom-Tom Time

IN WINTER LIGHT. By Edwin Corle. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1949. 209 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by STANLEY VESTAL

THIS, the seventh novel by Edwin Corle, sets its scene on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. Three of the Indian characters, Sees Many People, Big Talker, and Charley Piñon, have appeared previously in this author's "People on the Earth." This volume presents the love story of a young Navajo veteran, Robert Two Crows, and a Navajo girl, Betty Squashblossom who, having become the ward of Dr. Walterhouse, goes also by his name. The romance is threaded through the activities of the Navajo Indians and a group of white people thrown casually together. Apparently the author's purpose is to contrast the beauty, dignity, and naturalness of the unspoiled old-time Indian with the less attractive qualities of the white people in the story and those younger Indians who have been (in the view of their elders) corrupted by American civilization.

In order to make this contrast effective, the author has loaded his dice heavily against the whites. There is only one decent white character in the book, the old agency physician, Dr. Walterhouse. Every other white character is some kind of a heel. In order to balance the one decent white man the author has presented us with a stupid Indian bootlegger. He is the only unattractive Indian in the cast.

The book is remarkable for its unity of time. In its 209 pages scarcely more than a day elapses, beginning with the trader's free barbecue to the Indians and ending with the marriage of the lovers according to Navajo ritual and a sketch of one of the Indians wishing Merry Christmas to the stars. The plan of the novel is an alternation of expository or narrative passages in which the author instructs us, and brief scenes of dialogue between the characters, interspersed among which are a number of letters written by a radio script writer to her chief in New York. This scattered viewpoint enables Mr. Corle to avoid any deep probings into character or culture either of Indians or whites. And considering the general level of morality and intelligence of his characters, this is just as well.

At the same time the book touches lightly upon many phases of life in the Indian country, both the problems of the Indians and of the whites out there, more especially upon the problems of acculturation. There are passages of Indian humor which are charming, and considerable color. But the book is too light for really serious fiction and the action too diverse and casual to induce any urgent suspense.

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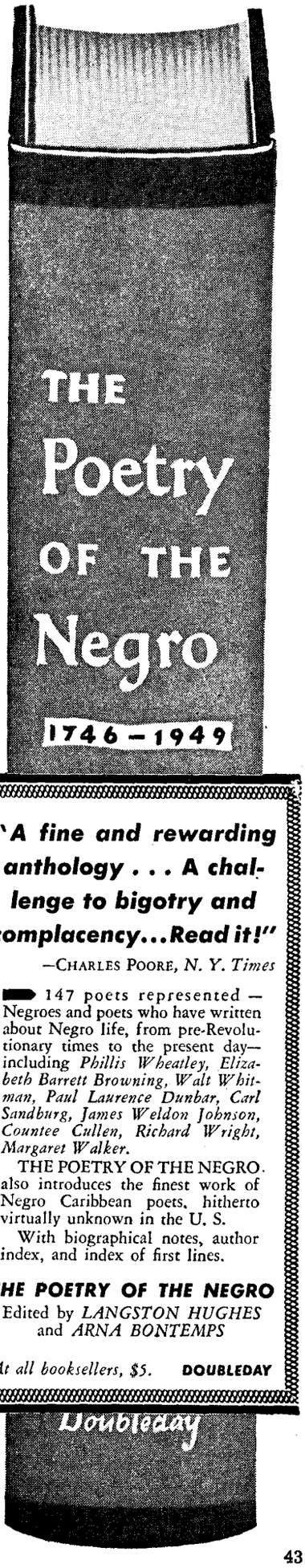

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The Film Forum

THE UNIVERSITY IDEA

The Saturday Review's Weekly Guide to Selected 16mm. Sound Films.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *On many of our great college campuses of today, with their huge endowments, their hundreds of buildings, widely scattered activities and students enrolled by tens of thousands, the old university idea is perhaps at times forgotten: that* universitas, *or compact whole created out of students and their teachers, which was one of the great inventions of the Middle Ages. Today we review two films of more than usual merit which center round two of the smaller universities—universities that have yet made something of a mark for themselves.*

PRINCETON

A film sponsored by Princeton University and jointly produced by Affiliated Film Producers, Inc. and International Film Foundation. Available from Princeton University, Princeton, N. J. (32 mins.)

This film has been produced by that distinguished documentary team, whose names—Hammid, Jacoby, Van Dyke, Rodakiewicz—are threaded through so much of the film history of the last fifteen years. Associated with them is Julien Bryan, himself a Princeton man, whose travels and lecture tours have made him one of the most warmly respected figures in the world of non-theatrical film.

The problem of the film was difficult enough to tax their best abilities. It was that of compressing into thirty minutes the life and spirit of Princeton, with all its long history, its rich associations, and the gift it makes to those who spend four years within its walls. It must be said at once that they have magnificently succeeded. The opening section evokes the memories of Princeton men who come back for class reunions. The fine camera work by Peter Glushanok lingers on ivied walls, glances up at the stone lions, catches a smile on a young face, or a moment of tense excitement at a ball game.

After reviewing the bicentennial celebrations, the film moves on to inquire what are the characteristics of a great teacher; and in a moving series of close-ups, finds that they lie in wit and wisdom, in the ability to marshal facts and to communicate feelings. Across from the teacher is the student, and the film dwells next on the student side of college life, with its games and examinations (observed by an honor system). So we go back into the past to review some of Princeton's history—a battleground in the Revolutionary War, the home of Jonathan Dickinson, Madison, and Aaron Burr.

All this, however, is but a prelude to the body of the film—a series of four episodes grouped round four members of the senior class. Each has at one time reached a turning point in his life, and it has been Princeton which has made him face the crisis and has helped him to find the solution.

There is Bill Brown, son of a newspaper editor, brash and careless, who is confronted for the first time by a sense of the need to weigh facts, not simply accept them, when he finds that his physics experiments don't square with the theory. Mike Salter, tied to a mother who runs a bookstore in Dallas, is set on becoming an author, though he has no talents for literature. It is his English teacher who, in a sudden flash of inspiration, is able to discern his real abilities and convince him where they lie. Dick Arkwright, pushing, successful, confident, is maneuvered by a skilful history professor into a series of admissions before a seminar class which are fatal to a pet theory he holds. He learns for the first time that a person can be wrong without losing dignity, and that he doesn't need to push people around to make them believe in him. Finally, George Hammond, brilliant and popular, is inclined to take too lightly the responsibility of writing a senior thesis on labor relations. His professor makes him realize that he cannot write without also knowing life; he spends a summer as a worker in an oil refinery, and his thesis gains a new dimension of reality.

Stated thus briefly and baldly, these episodes may not carry conviction. It is Alexander Hammid's brilliant casting and direction, and Jacoby's sensitive dialogue, which bring them to life and make them humorous, touching, and persuasive. If the film has a fault, it is an excessive wordiness which results from trying to cram so much into so little space. But it is a fine achievement and deserves the highest praise.

CAMBRIDGE

Produced by Everyman Films, London. Distributed by Films of the Nations, 55 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. (18 mins.)

This film, appropriately like the university it commemorates, bears the scars and erosions of time, for it was made more than ten years ago and the prints have been widely circulated in all parts of the world. Appropriately too, the impressions it leaves are those of ancient buildings overshadowing those who work and live in them. In "Princeton" it is the students and faculty who hold the scene, in "Cambridge" the halls and quadrangles, the great windows and long medieval vistas. This feeling of age permeates everything. No sequence in the film is as compelling as the four episodes in "Princeton." Yet the spirit of Cambridge, which breathes through the film as a whole, is more compelling.

—RAYMOND SPOTTISWOODE.

For information about the purchase or rental of any films, please write to Film Department, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y.

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING *Recording Technique, Surface*	PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
MOZART, SYMPHONY #39 IN E FLAT, K. 543. Cleveland Orch. Szell. Columbia MM 803 (3)	Both wide range; the Mozart is acoustically closer, less brilliant than the Haydn—hard to say whether difference is intentional and musical (i.e. smaller orch., closer quarters at Cleveland) or simply differing engineering technique. Both sounds are good, if different.	Two good modern replacements, excellent performances with up-to-date recording. Szell is a leading Mozart man today; brilliant, less ponderous than Beecham can be (note the fast minuet here), but relaxed, in the Czech manner. Ormandy's Haydn, also brilliant-toned, more massive in the louder portions. Both appear on a single LP record.
HAYDN, SYMPHONY #88 IN G. Philadelphia Orch. Ormandy. Columbia MM 801 (3)		
(BOTH OF THE ABOVE) Columbia LP: ML 4109 (1)		
MILHAUD, LE BOEUF SUR LE TOIT. (THE NOTHING DOING BAR.) 1919. Minneapolis Symphony, Mitropoulos. Columbia MX 308 (2) LP: ML 2032 (1 10″).	Good recording, usual Columbia style. Acoustics a bit dry, but highly suitable to this music. Lots of solo instrument work, for nice tone color.	Outrageously corny, wholly delightful music—will take you back to the flapper era! Semi-popular tunes, raucously, impishly dissonant. Original farce was staged with Jean Cocteau, 1920.

CLEARING SOME AIR

THE determination persists here not to pursue the question of who is to blame for the record war. I add, though, in the face of a widespread tendency to jump on RCA Victor because Columbia got there first, that the LP's prior debut does *not* necessarily prove Columbia's moral edge. Much obscure (to the public) development went on before either company let cats out of bags. Both tried systems other than those finally approved. There was long experimentation, even contact (many present officials having worked for both companies). There was a meeting of top brass, though whether the die was already cast is not clear. There was, of course, a final break, and all this before LP appeared last June. Who double-crossed whom is thus anything but evident, nor is it now relevant. Columbia won a scoop, Victor lost, which is neither here nor there as to blame nor as to which record is actually the better product.

Meanwhile, at this interim moment it's worth noting that both new records share features in common.

Both new records use plastic, unbreakable, of comparable quality. Low surface noise is a big plus on both, offset by a few annoying clicks and swishes not supposed to be present. A minus feature is the electrostatic, dust-collecting ability of currently used plastic, a serious trouble with both small-groove records. They are easily scratched, too, and the scratches tick loudly.

Both records offer considerable savings in cost and more in space. Prices will be comparable, per minute of music. Victorgrooves take more space laterally, less vertically than LP's—net difference not great.

Both records will play with the same pickup, in spite of minor groove variations. (But different speeds, different center holes.) This will simplify coming equipment.

Both records, note well, offer quality definitely improved over the standard 78 rpm record. There is now much to-do about which record gives the best quality. I solemnly state and hope readers will remember in the face of coming publicity barrages that, for the great majority of us, the practical differences between the two records will depend far more on "outside" factors—technical or musical quality of the original recording, the long playing factor, the artist and music repertory, available playing equipment—than on any directly noticeable differences in tone quality between the two systems.

Given an identical recording (shall we label it Victoria?) pressed in both LP and Victorgroove versions, few of us could detect, even with super-duper equipment, any audible difference in tone between the two. Since most home machines cannot possibly match either record's quality, the whole comparison is academic. Pin this on your wall for future reference!

—EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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BOOKED for TRAVEL

HOLIDAYS AT WHOLESALE

HAMILTON, BERMUDA.

AT forty-nine, a onetime carnival pitchman named William Edmund Butlin, a handsome, moustached Canadian who looks like Ronald Colman, is, hands down, the largest single resort operator in the world.

As the originator of the British holiday camps, which collectively can accommodate 27,000 people at one time, Billy Butlin has become the first man to mass-produce vacations on the grand scale. Since the first camp was opened in 1934, some 3,000,000 Britons have spent their vacations on the Butlin plan. Every time twelve people get together on the British Isles, the statistical chance is that one has been a Butlin camper.

The thought of 27,000 people, or the entire population of Hackensack, New Jersey, sitting down to lunch at one time in his six camps, which are scattered throughout Britain, used to make Billy Butlin get up in the middle of the night and take long walks in the moonlight. Being solely responsible for the existence and maintenance of whole villages, each with its own pubs, stores, and churches, was a realization Butlin in the beginning found both gratifying and mortifying. He has gotten used to the idea now, and has even found, in the numbers in which he deals, a certain security.

"If I get on a bus in London," says Butlin in his soft Canadian voice, "it's sure that one of my customers is on board. Rather makes me feel at home."

Besides his holiday camps, Butlin has bought an interest in and is now a director of three of the world's most famous hotels, the Carlton in Cannes, the de Paris in Monte Carlo, and the Scribe in Paris. Within the last year and a half, he purchased the Fort Montagu Beach in Nassau, and the Princess in Bermuda, two of the finest luxury resort hotels. Recently he bought one end of an entire island sixty miles off Palm Beach, Florida, on which he is building a holiday camp capable of accommodating, upon its completion in two years, 5,000 people at a time.

Although he has his 27,000 mouths to feed, at profit, every summer's day at home, Billy Butlin for one big economic reason is transferring much of his activity to this hemisphere. The reason is: dollars. At a recent press conference with American correspondents at the reopening of the Princess (on which he spent 300,000 pounds refurnishing), Butlin said with magnificent simplicity, "We needed some dollars over there. I thought I'd come over and try to get some off you."

Actually he had become weary listening to his industrialist British friends boasting of the goods they were exporting, and the dollars they were bringing home to Britain. "The only thing I know is the holiday business, and the only thing I can export is vacations," he explains. It was his original plan to carry the battle for the buck right into enemy territory, so to speak. He wanted to build camps in Florida and Texas, but the British Government refused to let him spend the necessary dollar credits. He hasn't altogether given up the idea.

Butlin conquered the problem of trying to earn U. S. dollars without spending dollars by purchasing part of Grand Bahama Island, the nearest piece of Caribbean territory to the United States inside the sterling area. When Butlin arrived on his island a short time ago, it was occupied solely by 700 natives, whose entire lives for generations had centered about the local fishing industry. Starting from scratch he sent in a small construction team to build homes for his own workers. When the first shacks were ready he dispatched fifty building experts to train the natives in the art of modern construction. It proved so difficult to teach a fisherman to plaster a wall when it is perpendicular, Butlin devised a scheme of having the natives cast the walls flat, in molds. When the walls harden they are lifted into place much in the manner of a pre-fabricated house. The design of the entire resort will follow the specifications of a British architect whom Butlin kept in Miami for six months sopping up local flavor.

When the first two thousand beds are ready in January 1950, Butlin expects to open a charter aircraft service, and fly vacationers from New York to Grand Bahama Island at a round-trip fare of $50. Guests will pay $100 a week for an air-conditioned bedroom and bath, and all meals. The resort will have a golf course, a sports-fishing fleet, and a yacht basin and yacht club for visiting ships. There will be no green fees, no charge for tennis courts, and the use of the fishing boats will be free. Movies, stage shows, and all indoor activities are included in the weekly price. About the only extras on which to spend money will be drinks, souvenirs, and clothing which will be made of British woolens by a British tailor on the premises.

William Edmund Butlin: "The only thing I can export is vacations."

There will be enough activity at Grand Bahama to wear out an adolescent with hypertension, but Butlin insists that there will be no regimentation. "If I told Americans to come down here to be regimented, they'd tell me 'nuts.'" According to legend Butlin's penchant for an active resort program, and for that matter, his entire resort empire, derives from a boring holiday he spent at a hotel in South Wales in 1922. It rained every day, and when the hotel planned nothing for its guests during seven shut-in days, Butlin decided there was a great opportunity in the holiday business.

Born in Capetown, he moved to Canada at the age of six. In his early teens he got a job in the advertising department of the T. Eaton Company, a Canadian department-store chain and mail-order house which today employs some 30,000 people. By falsifying his age he enlisted in the Canadian Army when he was fifteen, and found himself a private in France a year later. He got his first look at England when he was abroad, and liked it. Mustered out at nineteen, he discovered he had learned nothing at an age when he should have been knee deep in school books. None the less he went back to Canada, and the playing fields of Eaton's, for another short hitch in advertising.

In 1920 he took a stall at the Cana-

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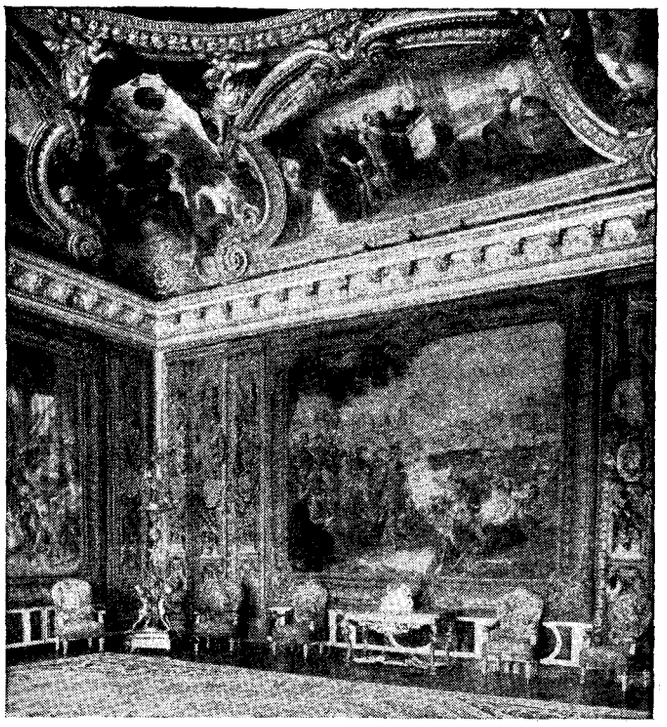

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dian National Exposition at Toronto, in which he operated a dart-throwing game. By cajoling enough myopic fair-goers to try their luck at the dart game he accumulated sufficient money for a return trip to England, where the fields, so he recalled, were greener. From the time the holiday idea first struck Butlin in South Wales it took him twelve years to accumulate the necessary money to open the first camp. In the meantime he padded his bank account by securing the British agency for Dodg-em cars, the electric, amusement-park vehicles, of which he figures he sold some 25,000. When sales were off he operated the Dodg-em carnival concessions himself.

The first Butlin holiday camp opened in 1935 with accommodations for 1,000 persons. Guests were housed in separate chalets, and were given a choice of seabathing, tennis, boating, and putting greens. At night everyone congregated at a theatre where the guests themselves put on amateur shows. In those days he charged $14 per person a week all meals included.

The idea was such a success that during the winter which followed Butlin doubled the size of the first camp, and began another in the south. By the spring of 1936 he had 3,000 beds. In the second war, Butlin, by this time an accepted authority in his field, worked with Beaverbrook in the Ministry of Supply. He set up recreation camps for troops all over Europe, and likes to recall that he was the first civilian in Brussels. The first holiday camp reopened in June 1945, and the other five (three are in England, one each in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland) followed in short order.

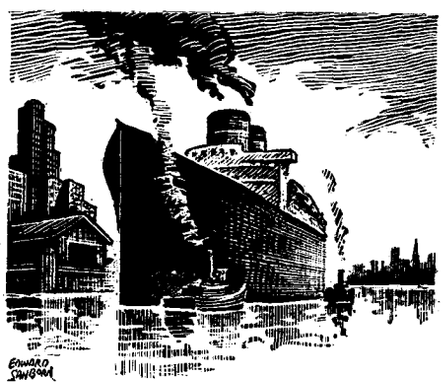
Butlin's biggest postwar problem has been food, a difficulty about which he can command a sympathetic ear from most anybody when he explains that his Governmental allowance per guest is sixteen cents' worth of meat a week. For other staples he dispatches armies of agents who buy entire fields of potatoes and cabbages. "We buy by the lorry load," he explains. Butlin figures it costs him $9 a week per guest for raw food, and another $9 to prepare and cook it. He charges $35 a week in his British camps, an amount he figures is equal to the $100 he will charge Americans at his Nassau camp, considering the difference in living costs.

His British camps, which Americans can, of course, attend for $35 a week if they make their reservations in time (he usually sells out for the summer by early spring), offer swimming, boating, tennis, or sitting in a deck chair. He runs physical training classes because he feels that since the war people are more conscious of keeping fit. On rainy days he holds bathing-beauty competitions, ballroom dancing lessons, and what he calls "fashion parades." Guests are urged to enter everything, and fifty cents out of the weekly rate which each guest pays is allocated for prizes. Nobody goes home without winning something. To keep things humming he maintains an entertainment staff of 150, all of whom wear bright red blazers which can be spotted a mile away by any guest bordering on boredom.

Butlin likes to maintain a microscopic scrutiny on each of his ventures, a habit which is becoming increasingly difficult to keep. "If I see a bit of paper in the lobby," he says, "the assistant managers will pass it by, but quite likely I shall stoop and pick it up." The first day the Princess, now the most expensive hotel in Bermuda, opened for business Butlin heard a guest leave the dining room in a huff after being charged ninety cents for a glass of milk. He left his own table, went running up the stairs after him. When the guest verified the complaint Butlin apologized, took the charge off the bill, and repaired to the kitchen to raise some private hell.

To keep some contact with his empire as it grows more far flung every day, Butlin flies back and forth across the Atlantic with a staff that includes his doctor, an accountant, two secretaries, and, what he calls, "two or three useful people." His wife, who is both blonde and beautiful, travels with him on every second trip. "She gets *aboot*," he says in his holdover Canadian accent. He refuses to travel by boat. "Every time the telephone would ring on shipboard I should think someone was calling to say the thing is sinking." Although he is fond of staying up late with his retinue at parties at one of his enterprises, he can fall asleep anywhere almost at will. "Sometimes you wake up in the morning," says Billy Butlin, "and you wonder where you are. So then you say to yourself, 'If it's hot, you're in Nassau, if it's cold, you're in New York, if its raining, it must be London.' Really, it's quite as simple as that."

—HORACE SUTTON.



TRAVELERS' TALES

ALL THE BEST IN SCANDINAVIA, by Sydney Clark. Dodd, Mead. $4. Here is Sydney Clark again with his ninth travel book, proving you can't keep a good man home. This one, as you would expect, has to do with Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and of course it is here in time for the annual summer pilgrimage abroad. Clark divides his books three ways: the foreground, which gives passport and currency data; the background, which is an informal history, and the body of the book, a compilation of travel chatter concerning cities, restaurants, hotels, sightseeing, and people. If you're bound for the smörgasbord countries this summer, I wouldn't reach for a visa before having a look at Clark's "Scandinavia." Probably you won't be putting reindeer milk in your coffee, as he says the Lapps do, but if you're ever in Bornholm and you feel like a hot dog, it's handy to know that what you ask for is a *varme polser*.

YOU MUST SEE CANADA, by Cecil Carnes. Ziff-Davis. $2.75. Cecil Carnes, who helped write a pleasant little book on Mexico last year, has written a pleasant little guide on Canada. It is not a very heavy treatment, either intellectually or informationally, but there is a smattering of data on points from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. Particularly I thought the treatment was rather thin on the Laurentians, Canada's great eastern resort area whose entire business is tourism, to say nothing of Victoria, which Mr. Carnes dismissed in two short paragraphs. There are some bright stories, en route across the Dominion, however, particularly the one about Louis Wong of Banff, and the gold-bearing oranges.

THE LONG LAND—CHILE, by Carleton Beals. Coward-McCann. $4. The seventh book in the Invitation to Travel Series, which so far has covered only countries south of the border, has been written by Carleton Beals, than whom there is no more erudite an authority. He gives you enough history to get by on, and enough of the local industrial problems—which mostly concern nitrate—to equip you with an economic understanding of the land. But Carleton Beals also talks of hotels, giving specific names and prices, and he lets you know that money is difficult to exchange in Chile, that summer falls from December to April, and that pig's ears are a delicacy. It is written conversationally, with extreme ease, packed like a Schrafft's gift box with an uncountable number of tidbits.

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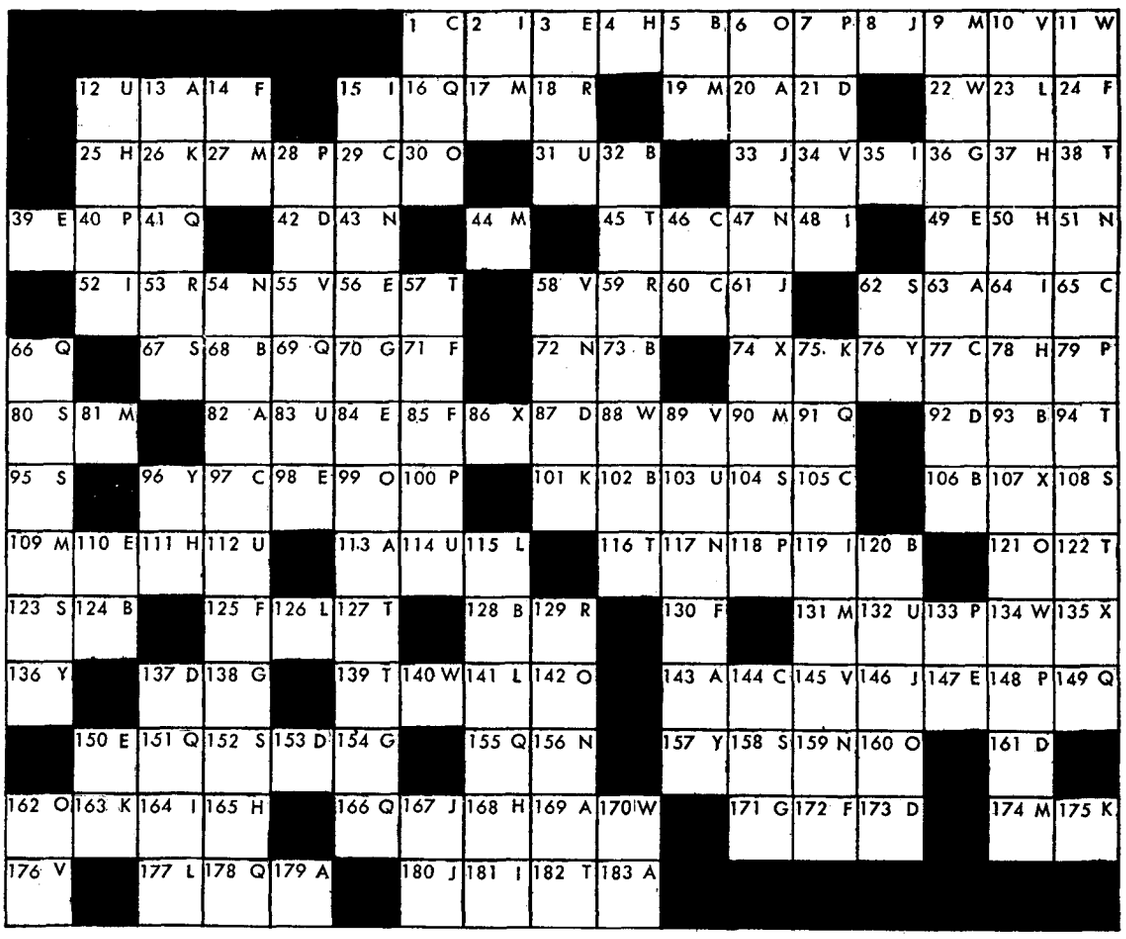
DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 782

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Pertaining to the division of applied chemistry dealing with the industrial use of organic substances, esp. from farm products, as soybeans, peanuts, etc.	169 113 63 179 82 20 183 13 143
B. A famous summer resort "Beach" in Maine.	32 120 124 73 102 106 93 68 5 128
C. Not intentional or conscious.	144 29 97 1 60 65 46 105 77
D. Czech conductor, composer of the opera "Bluebeard" (1824-76).	153 21 87 92 161 173 42 137
E. Virile; vigorous (comp.; U. S. colloq.).	150 56 147 98 39 3 49 110 84
F. Art of developing a new coat of hair, set of feathers, etc. (biol.).	85 172 24 125 14 130 71
G. Stage esp., floor or story (Fr.).	70 138 171 154 36
H. Universal or general, in human interests, etc.	4 168 165 78 50 111 25 37
I. Disentangled.	119 2 35 15 181 52 64 164 48
J. Friend of Hercules who took to him the fatal shirt (Gr. myth.).	167 146 33 61 8 180
K. A place or condition of neglect or oblivion.	75 175 26 101 163
L. A pail, small tub, or can (Eng. dial.).	126 115 177 141 23

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. Nickname of Ambrose Philips, English poet, friend of Steele and Addison.	90 44 131 9 17 109 19 27 174 81
N. Historic site in Virginia, Battle of 1781.	43 156 54 159 72 51 117 47
O. Short title of a didactic romance in two parts by Lyly, 1579-80.	160 6 162 121 99 30 142
P. Having confidence in.	7 133 28 40 79 118 148 100
Q. Poems written in a wild, irregular strain.	91 178 155 151 66 69 16 41 166 149
R. American inventor associated with the elevator (1811-61).	129 53 59 18
S. The proposition which implies (logic).	104 108 62 80 152 67 158 123 95
T. An island in New York Bay, N. Y.	45 116 182 38 94 127 139 122 57
U. Appellation of "pepper" as African cubeb.	103 112 12 132 83 31 114
V. A brutally harsh or unfair transaction (2 wds.; slang).	145 89 58 176 55 34 10
W. Arabian novel, 1786, in French, but known chiefly in its English translation.	134 22 88 140 11 170
X. Friend to Antony ("Antony and Cleopatra").	135 86 107 74
Y. A South American capital.	136 76 157 96



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

MARCH 19, 1949

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 43 of this issue.

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